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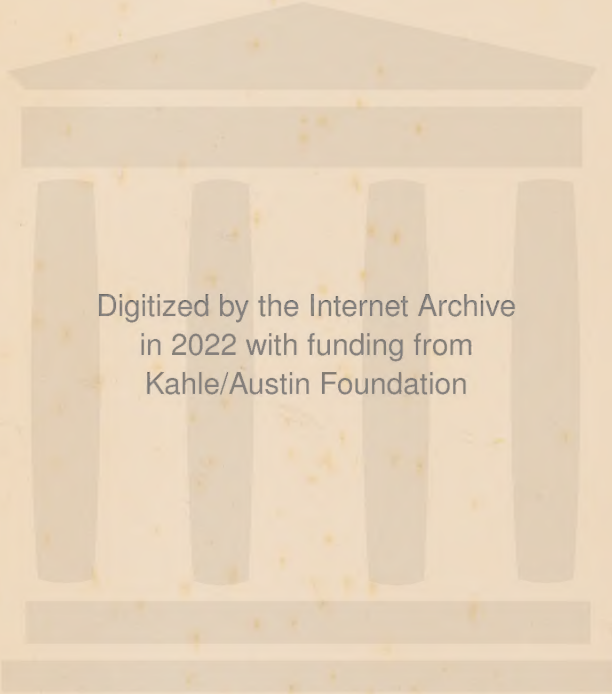


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TO WIGGLETON

THE CHIMNEYS
OF TATTLETON

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*"We be reet enough. Yo con tell us aw abeaft sermon
when yo coom back."*

THE CHIMNEYS OF TATTLETON

A STORY OF OLD LANCASHIRE

BY
LAWRENCE PILKINGTON

AUTHOR OF
"TATTLEFOLD"; "THOUGHTS IN HOSPITAL";
"AN ALPINE VALLEY"; ETC.

Map and Frontispiece by
MARGARET PILKINGTON



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1928

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Printed in Great Britain

PREFACE

THE *Chimneys of Tattleton* is a sequel to *Tattlefold*. Some of the old characters appear again and others are introduced. The dialect is simplified to suit the ordinary reader, and there is a glossary at the end of the book.

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LIST OF CHARACTERS

At Goldmark Hall : Josiah Jobling, ex-Mayor of Wiggleton; his wife, *Sophia*; his daughter *Aurora*; *Grandpa*, and the Irish butler.

At Tattle Hall : Squire Thornton; his son, *Jim*; his daughter-in-law, *Polly*, and her son; the governess, *Miss Penny*; and *Jane*, the factotum.

In Tattlefold : The Professor.

The Doctor.

The Vicar.

Sal—*Sarah Broadbeam*; her father, *Sim*—*Simon Shivers*; her uncles, *Silas*, the sexton, and *John Skinner*; *Ann Sharples*, sister to *Jane*.

Others : Dr. Oldbird.

Lord Newpen.

Priscilla Prickles, advocate of Women's Rights.

Herbert Temple, colliery manager and friend of *Jim*.

Guy Hetheridge, a young artist.

Skewgill, Methodist Minister, and *Susannah*, his wife.

At Filby Green : Mrs. Mackay; her son, *Roy*, and her daughter, *Flora*.

THE CHIMNEYS OF TATTLETON

CHAPTER I

TATTLEFOLD CHURCHYARD

SILAS, the sexton of the old church in Tattlefold, stood leaning on his spade while looking over the wall of the churchyard. It was growing dark under a November sky obscured by flying clouds; a broad ribbon of light lay in the west where the day still lingered, farther north the hills loomed dark and mysterious. The dying day lit up the old man's face as he looked down the road leading to the valley; he was evidently waiting for someone.

When the clock in the church tower struck, Silas nodded slowly and muttered to himself, "Owd John wur mostly allus late. He wur late in marryin' Epsie, an' now as he wants to see th' grave he be late again." Just then the Professor—a spacious, elderly man with a round spectacled face—came ambling up the hill. When Silas caught sight of him a queer smile twisted the corners of his mouth and disappeared in the wrinkles of his face. The Professor was deep in thought, and would have passed the churchyard if Silas had not called out, "I reckon yo've lost yore wind; dun yo know as brow cooms steeper as we get owder, an' them as goes easy lasts longest?"

The Professor started and looked at Silas for a moment; then his face cleared suddenly and he laughed

a deep guttural laugh full of good crackling humour. "Soh! It is you, my friend. Are you not satisfied with making graveholes? Do you also wish to frighten me? You did look like one goblin of the darkness standing by the grave which you have opened."

"Goblin!" growled Silas. "It wur Owd Mowdi-wort as yo called me when I tow'd yo about Lambkin."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the Professor, "that was one good make-belief; it is many years now since you did tell me that story. But why do you look so anxious down the road?"

Silas made no answer, so the Professor stood silently beside him and gazed over the darkening valley. The chimneys of Tattleton showed tall and dark against the western light, the pale poisonous alkali-smoke streamed towards the north-east, and the acrid smell from the new chemical works swept over the churchyard.

"Ach!" cried the Professor, "it is all one big stink. Tattleton does spread down the valley towards Wiggleton like one great Octopus; the smoke from that chemical works does kill the trees in Tattle Park; no wonder the good Squire does say damn. Ach soh! All does change, and the houses of the new rich people do grow on the other side. Tattlefold will soon be buried in the Dead Sea."

"What did yo say as Tattleton wur like?"

"An Octopus, my friend."

"What be a Noctopus?"

"An Octopus is"—here the Professor entered into a scientific description of the Cephalopods. When he concluded, Silas growled, "Con't yo speak English? I doan understond German. I arst yo, 'what be a Noctopus?' Con't yo tell me plain?"

"Soh! I shall put it thus: An Octopus is one big stomach with many long arms which have horrible

suckers all over them. With these they do catch everythings they can reach, and they do thrust everythings into that stomach. They have also a terrible beak, and if somethings is too big to put into that stomach they do tear him to pieces first."

"Ow big be a Noctopus?"

"The biggest have bodies and arms altogether sixty feet long."

"I doan believe it."

"Nevertheless it is true, my friend."

"Ow! So Tattleton be a Noctopus. I mun tell Sim that; I reckon it'll mak' 'is skin creep. It will thot. Aw t'same, yo doan speak English so weel as yo did afore yo took to going to Germany. I doan see as thot does yo any good."

"It is true I do not always speak the English so well. My wife also does tell me that, but I do get old and do forget. Nevertheless, I like to see my friends in Germany now my son has married and left my house."

A moody silence followed, which was broken at last by Silas.

"Ast nowt to say?"

"My friend, I have already asked you, who is it that you do wait for?"

"Oo do I wait for? John Skinner in, course! Oo else wud I wait for, I'd like to know? This be 'is grave. He be bringing his second wife, Epsie, 'ere to-morrer. He's oneasy, an' he's coming to see as aw is ready for 'er." Dropping a pebble into the grave Silas continued, "Sounds oller, doan it? Thot be top o' John's fust wife's coffin; hoo wur allus dried oop like, a proper vixen. Why John wants to see 'er coffin I dun know; 'appen he's feart as th' owd girl inside 'll flutter about when Epsie's put atop o' 'er. John wur allus feart o' wimmin. Fust wife

never gave 'im a chance; 'ooked him afore he knowed what hoo wur about, arter thot hoo wur allus pickin at 'im. John wur weel shut o' 'er, an' he wur lucky to get Epsie, he wur thot; Susannah nigh snappit him oop fust, reet afore Epsie's nose an' aw, an' Susannah ud a done it but for Sarah Broadbeam.

"Aye, John wur lucky; Epsie fed him weel an' made 'im comfortable, an' let him go 'is own road as far as wur good for 'im. I reckon Epsie made best black puddings as ony ever made in Tattlefowt—reel tasty ones; I doubt their like 'll not be seen again. Theer'll be no black puddin's wheer Epsie be gone to, I reckon. Aye, John wur lucky as Susannah didn't snap him oop. Susannah 'ooked Skewgill instead; hoo said it wur th' Lord's doing, but I reckon hoo didn't leave it to the Lord, not 'er. But thot's an owd tale, yo knows aw abeawt thot so I needn't tell yo. Aye, we'll miss Epsie, we shall thot; an' John 'll be fair lost wi' wanting 'er, he will thot."

"I fear that is so," said the Professor. "I am much grieved for John Skinner. I do remember that I did hear his wife was ill; then she did get better, then she did die quick."

"Aye, hoo wur better. Both th' owd Doctor and th' young Doctor poo'd 'ard an' got 'er creeping upards; then hoo turnt onraisonable an' run down aw o' a suddint an' fluttered eawt as wimmin will. Th' owd Doctor said it wur stoppage, an' young un called it a long name; an' Susannah said the hond o' the Lord wur 'eavy on 'er an' tossed 'er too an' fro on th' waves of affliction. I reckon it wur nowt but summat eawt o' flunter in 'er innards. Hoo 'd a terrible bally-warch."

"I do notice, my friend, that you do not use the language of the drawing-room. It is time you were sent to the young ladies' school, where all the new rich people in Tattleton do go."

“Drawrin’-room be dommed! What good ud a drawrin’-room do me, I’d like to know? Aw as I wants is to sit in th’ armcheer at whoam wi’ my bacca beside me, an’ when I’m dry an’ wants company theer’s th’ ‘Archangel’ ’andy to go to. Th’ young uns allus mak’s room for me near th’ fire. Drawrin’-room! I thowt yo knowed me better till thot; an’ I reckon yo ain’t got much use for drawrin’-rooms neither, by most accounts.”

“That is true, my friend. I do like my music-room and my library. But they tell me it is not only the room by the fire that the young people do find for you, they also do give you beer to make you tell them tales. Your tales are sometimes very fine, but it is not well to take too much beer; our good Vicar is distressed when you do that.”

“Thot’s Passon’s business, not yours, I reckon. It be aw reet for yo in yore fine music-room an’ yore library, wi’ yore family aw reawnt yo; I be aw by mysel’, an’ wheer else wud I go for company an’ a bit o’ fun but to th’ pub, I’d like to know? Theer’s no ’arm in a tale, or a glass o’ beer neither, I reckon. An’ when aw is said an’ done, I does my best to please Passon. Passon’s reel jannock. Time as Hogbin th’ undertaker ’adn’t a coffin ready, an’ they didn’t know what to do wi’ carpse, cos ’is men wur eawt on strike, I went to see Passon abeawt it. Passon wur in ’is study, sittin’ in ’is armcheer by th’ fire—same as he goes to sleep in when he writes ’is sarmons—so he arst me to sit me down in th’ cheer on t’other side o’ th’ fire. Theer wur a bottle o’ whisky on chimbly-piece. So I sits me down an’ gives a shiver, an’ he arsts me if I wur cowl? I sed nowt, but I looked ’ard at th’ bottle on th’ chimbly-piece; so he sent for a glass for me, he did thot. Aye, Passon’s reel jannock, not a rotten ’ole in ’im from stem to starn, as th’ sailors say.”

The Professor laughed, and remarked, "The Vicar is, as you say, 'reel jannock,' and if you would take as little to drink as he does it would be better for you, my friend."

"I doan tak' as much as some does, an' theer's never no ill feelin' at th' 'Archangel' over theer; Mat Spigott, th' landlord, sees to thot. If anyone is a bit rampagus he just puts 'is 'and on that mon's shoulder an' sets 'im down. 'Cos why? Mat's eighteen stone an' 'earty; he doan stand no proper drunks in 'is house, he doan."

"Well, my friend, I must go now; it will soon be dark and it has become cold; so good-night."

"Good-neet. Mind yo doan fall over that theer toombstone."

The light in the west had faded, and the moon was showing fitfully through the flying clouds before Silas heard John Skinner coming down the road. He waited until John came in through the gate, and then said sharply, "Dost think as I've nowt to do but wait for thee aw neet?"

"Nay, nay, Si; it wurn't my doings as made me late; th' house wur fair thrut oop wi' wimmin fowk, an' I shouldn't a been here now if Sal Broadbeam 'adn't coom along. She soon sorted um; sed it wur time Epsie wur nailed oop. Seems to me as wimmin are more fain to see us when we be corpsies than when we be wick."

Silas nodded sympathetically, and said, "Weel, I never 'ad a wife an' never wished for one but onct. When I con't tak' keer o' myself they can mak' a carpsie of me an' look at me as much as they 'ave a mind to. Wimmin is mostly the root of aw evil, I'm thinkin'."

"Neaw, Si, thou doesn't kneaw what thou art talkin' abeawt. I reckon Epsie wur a good friend to thee as weel as to me."

"Aye, John, she wur thot. But thou'rt late, mon; it be too dark to see i' th' grave neaw. Th' owd coffin be aw reet, so thou const bide content." Dropping a stone into the grave, Silas continued, "Rings oller, but th' wood's as sound as th' owd bell i' th' tower oop theer."

"Nay, nay, Si, I mun see it. Fot thy lantern cawt o' th' church."

While Silas went to fetch the lantern John Skinner waited patiently beside the grave. He knew his old friend wished to comfort him, but was too shy to express any sympathy with him. When Silas returned with the lantern John Skinner went down into the grave and satisfied himself that all was right; he felt he owed that to Epsie, and was strangely comforted when he had done so. While Silas put the ladder away, the old man stood with his face towards the church tower over which moonlight and shadow were passing swiftly, and although he was unconscious of the wild beauty of the night he felt there was rest and peace in the loneliness of the quiet graveyard.

When Silas returned the two old men walked stiffly out of the churchyard together. As Silas locked the gate he broke the silence by saying, "Gate's gettin' owd, an' we be gettin' owd, an' I reckon Tattlefowt be gettin' owd. We be aw gettin' owd together; save Tattleton. I ain't got no use for Tattleton, nor for th' new fowk over theer; they con go to hell for aw as I care. They pass me by as if I wur an owd badger, without sayin' so much as 'Ow do'. Thou const coom an' sit wi' me if thou 'ast a moind to, I'm aw by mysel', thee kneaws."

With a grim laugh he added, "Thou'lt be safe from y'min fowk at my house."

CHAPTER II

THE OLD HALL

AFTER bidding Silas good night, the Professor went on up the hill past the Vicarage and soon arrived at the Old Hall where he lived. He had bought this when he gave up his professorship in Germany so that he and his wife might live near their son and daughter who were settled in the neighbourhood. 'Th' Owd Hall, as the natives called it, was a picturesque old stone house built more than a couple of centuries ago; it stood high above the village, and its mullioned windows afforded wide views over hill and dale.

The Professor had settled down very happily in this English home; he liked the inhabitants of the old village of Tattlefold, and had been accepted as one of the great four—"Th' Owd Squire, Passon, 'Th' Owd Doctor an' th' Professor." He was also interested in the industrial revolution which was spreading so rapidly over the North, though it was obliterating much that he admired and introducing much of which he disapproved.

Before entering the house the Professor scraped his shoes carefully and then wiped them on the mat, smiling as he did so when he recalled how carefully his wife had trained him in all such matters of cleanliness, including a cold bath every morning. She was still in London, where he had left her on his return

from Germany; and, as he did not like being alone, he had trusted the Vicar and the Doctor to sup with him. Meanwhile, he meant to put in a couple of hours' work on his history, a truly colossal undertaking. On entering his library, however, he sat down in front of the fire in a fit of abstraction, took up his big German pipe and began filling it.

The library was by far the most comfortable room in the house. Its very appearance was a greeting; its walls were lined with shelves filled with the Professor's favourite books, and a table stood in the centre covered with volumes in use for consultation and reference when he was writing his history. He had collected almost everything bearing on the period that he was writing about, for he intended his history to be an exhaustive one. He enjoyed working on it, and often wondered what he would do when it was finished; but his wife assured him that he would always find some occupation, for she knew that the present, with all its possibilities, interested him even more than the past.

When the Professor sat down in his library the impression of the scene in the churchyard was still vivid in his mind; and, as he smoked his pipe, he reviewed the years that had passed since he first came to live in Tattlefold. Much had happened therein. The war between France and Germany in 1870 had disturbed and distressed him, and he contemplated the rapid development of mechanical industry with increasing misgiving. Tattleton had grown into a town that overshadowed Tattlefold; and, though attention was being directed to social and industrial conditions, good old North Country customs and traditions were disappearing.

When he awoke from his reverie he looked round at his bookshelves and gave a sigh of relief. The

mere presence of his beloved books reassured him; it comforted him to think that the experience and wisdom of the past would still be handed down from generation to generation.

The library was lit by an oil lamp, but there were candlesticks on the mantelpiece so that those who wished to read might have a good light beside them. The Professor lit one of these, took up Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and sat down. Before he had read a single page he shut the book up impatiently. Wealth! What was Wealth? The impression of the chimneys of Tattleton seen from the churchyard gloomed in his mind. What was wealth? How conditions changed! Yet, surely, Wealth should mean well-being for mind and soul as well as for body. The Professor pictured the Industrial Revolution as a great cloud spreading over the whole world and blotting out the light? Was he right in doing so? Or was he troubled with a phantom of his own imagination? Then he took the book up again and read steadily on.

The supper which the Professor gave his friends was quite simple, but there was one dish of which he was specially fond. This consisted of slices of liver sausage on bread and butter; he was pleased to find that both the Vicar and the Doctor liked it. "The English," he said, "only know the little sausage that is made of the pig, also the saveloy; the saveloy he is nothings, the little sausage of the pig is good if he is well made; but the German sausage which is composed of the liver!—Ach! There is nothings like him. He only of all the sausages is fit for the emperors and the kings to eat. His interior does not consist of the cat and the dog, as people of malice do say—no, no—quite other things. He does consist of the most savoury parts of the best animals; also observe, he is

already cooked, and his skin does preserve him from the fly and the bluebottle who do wish to taste him, and as he is thus safe inside his skin he does keep good for a very long time. He does also digest like nothings else, especially if he is followed by some good light wine such as my old friends in Germany do send me. Ach, soh! You have nothings so good in England."

The Doctor, who was a Scotsman, winked at the Vicar and then asked the Professor, "Have you ever tasted haggis?"

"No," said he, "that I have not done. What is this haggis? Is he a wild animal? I have only heard of the deer and of the grouse."

"Haggis," replied the Doctor impressively, "consists of all the most savoury parts and juices of our hardy mountain sheep. These are mixed with oatmeal and thrust into the stomach of the sheep, which is then tied up and boiled. It is somewhat like your sausage but more savoury; it has also this great virtue, it digests itself—even a baby might eat it. Scotsmen are brought up on haggis, they get their bone from the oatmeal, and their sinew from the juices of the active mountain sheep. Haggis is, indeed, a perfect food, especially when taken with a glass of Highland whisky. Neat."

"Indeed!" said the Professor, "In that case I do suppose you will prescribe it for all your patients and for the babies also."

"No," replied the Doctor; "were I to do that I should have no patients left."

The Vicar chortled and said, "Then I should have to bury them all. He gave me a haggis once; when it was put on the table it spurted all over the cloth."

"Of course it did," the Doctor replied, "that was due to the strength of it. You should have pricked a little hole in the skin and let the steam out."

"Ach, soh!" cried the Professor, "it is all one trap. You would pull one of my legs, and you would spoil my wife's tablecloth."

"No, no," the Doctor replied, "not at all. I'll get a friend of mine to send you one from Scotland, then you'll see I'm not far wrong. We all have our favourite dishes. Father Tim likes beans and bacon with his beer. I'll tell you what we'll do, we'll get the Squire to give us all three dishes and Mistress Polly shall decide which is the best. It will amuse him, he wants cheering up."

"But," said the Professor, "it is only the other day you did bleed him for the gout, now you would wish to feed him."

"I did bleed him," the Doctor admitted, "and he's all the better for it; a little feeding now would do him no harm. I'm not really anxious about him, he's got a fine constitution, but he's too fond of his port, and when it runs to gout he's difficult to manage. He's worrying about Jim; he intended him to take Jack's place at the Colliery, but now Jim has done so well at the engineering works he feels it would be a pity for him to give that up. On the other hand, much of the family money has been sunk in the colliery. He's anxious about that because Mistress Polly's son, Dick, is heir to the estate and he's only a boy yet."

"Ach!" exclaimed the Professor, "it will be one thousand pities if Jim does give the mechanics up, he has always had somethings of the genius for them."

The Doctor agreed; but he added, "I understand there is always a good deal of mechanical work about a colliery."

"That is so," the Professor admitted, "but it is a simple mechanics. Also, Herbert Temple and Dixon

do manage the colliery well; it would be best to leave it thus, they are still young men. What do you say, Father Tim?"

"I don't know much about it, I should let Jim decide for himself; he is a thoroughly good lad."

"Good lad!" exclaimed the Professor. "He is a fine young man, and I do fear he may give up the mechanics to please his father. That he should not do, for he is one mechanical genius. We must stop that if we can. What do you say, Doctor?"

"I don't see that you need worry. Jim will not be dictated to. I think Father Tim's right, leave him to decide for himself."

After supper the Professor led the way to the library, saying as he did so, "Now we shall have some smokes; I know you do like this room."

When they were seated he produced a long white clay for the Vicar, then he turned to the Doctor and said, "Will you like to smoke one of my large German pipes, or will you use the Hubbledy-Bubbledy in the corner there?"

"None of your foreign pipes for me," replied the Doctor. "I'll smoke my old Scotch briar, if you don't mind. By the way, didn't I see you standing with Silas by John Skinner's grave?"

"That is so," the Professor admitted; "Silas did wait for John Skinner to come and look down into the grave to see if his first wife's coffin was quite good. While he did wait we did talk about Tattleton besides other things. The smoke from the big chimney of the new chemical works did blow over the churchyard, and how he did stink. Silas does not like the new works or the new people. He also did talk about Hephzibah, the wife of John Skinner; he did call her Epsie, and I think he has much sorrow

that she is dead. I also think he does put a rough crust on to the top of himself to hide his sorrow. Is it not so, Father Tim?"

The Vicar nodded assent, took a long puff at his pipe, then went on to say, "That is an old story. Both Silas and John Skinner were said to be courting Hephzibah Sharples, but nothing came of it; John Skinner married another woman and Silas never married. Some said Hephzibah was fond of Silas, but her people objected to the marriage, and Silas got his back up about it. John Skinner remained a widower for many years; then, as you may remember, there was all that talk about Susannah Malkin which ended in John Skinner marrying Hephzibah and Susannah marrying Skewgill, which proved a very happy arrangement. Susannah has helped Skewgill with his ministry at the Methodist chapel, and Hephzibah made John Skinner an excellent wife."

"So Silas did say," the Professor remarked; "but he did speak quite other things of the first wife. He did take a stone and did drop it down on to her coffin and did say to me, 'Sounds 'oller; hoo wur allus dried up and a regular vixen.' He did make me to shiver."

"Very gruesome," said the Doctor. "'Sounds 'oller' would make a good text; Father Tim might give us a sermon on it next Sunday."

"Not I," replied the Vicar, "Skewgill might. He would serve it up with a touch of hell fire, and have his congregation weeping over it."

"A touch!" laughed the Doctor. "He'd give it them hot while he was about it."

"You can laugh," said the Professor, "but I still do see the chimneys of Tattleton against the streak of light where the sun does set, and I do feel the darkness gathering round me, and I do hear the sound

of the stone on the coffin. These things did affect my imaginations; the darkness did seem 'a darkness that could be felt'. It did remind me of the great picture of the Crucifixion by Tintoretto in the church at Venice, which I did once see when a thunderstorm was outside. The chimneys of Tattleton stood up against the light just like the crosses in the picture at Venice, and the darkness did seem to swallow up Tattlefold."

"Silas has given you a fit of the blues," said the Doctor.

"That may be so," the Professor admitted, "but I do not like this sudden expansion of the mechanical industry. The Limited Liability Companies have made so great a difference, it is not good."

"But," the Doctor reminded him, "you used to think the Limited Companies were good for trade."

"For trade. That is so; but the Companies that you do call bogus and all the gambling in the shares is not good; also, the big public companies do separate the employer from the workpeople. Instead of the old employer you do get the shareholder and the board of the directors, who see principally nothings; that will lead to great troubles. The Joblings, he did turn the big mill down the valley into one Public Company when the boom had arrived; that was what you call one big swindle. The shares he did make double the value, and then he did sell them; the new shareholders have lost much money since then and the Joblings did buy in again at the bottom price. There has been many things said by the workpeople about that. I suppose the Joblings does pride himself on coming in on the ground floor and going out on the top. That is very nice for the Joblings, but for the people of the small purse whom he did swindle, they

did not like coming in on the top floor and being pushed out on the bottom. It is all one bad trick. No, I do not like the speculation."

"But," the Doctor objected, "if there was no speculation there would be little new development. Someone must risk money in the mines, for instance."

"That is so," the Professor admitted, "but it is quite other things when the public is deceived and swindled. The workpeople do not forget the unfair speculations and the swindles; they do talk much about them, they also do exaggerate them, for they have not so many things that do interest them as we have. I do come into this room with you, my two friends; we have much to talk about, and round us we have all these shelves full of the beautiful books that do contain all the fine thought and experience of the past ages. Do not forget that the ignorant are never tolerant; the dishonest politician does know that well, and he does trade much on it."

"The workpeople may be ignorant," remarked the Doctor, "but they have a sound commonsense which many of the learned have not. Men of learning often think they know everything just because they are authorities about one special thing; such people are the most intolerant people on the face of the earth."

"Ha, ha," laughed the Professor; "our good Doctor has been bitten by one large fly, but what I would still say is this: we can find experience and help from the knowledge of the past; that knowledge does give us a perspective which the workpeoples have not got; they do see only the things that are close to the nose and they do not make allowances. We do know more of the limitations of all human knowledge and effort. We do know that it does often happen that even one simple mistake does bring great troubles. Is it not so?"

The Vicar nodded assent, but the Doctor demurred. "All the same," he said, "you can't have progress without change, and you can't have change without many drawbacks and mistakes. I hardly think we are unbiassed judges; when we were young we looked at the world through very different spectacles from what we do now. The best of the young business men are hard-working and enthusiastic about their work."

"That is so," the Professor admitted; "but you cannot deny that the large works and the public companies do separate the employer from the workpeople; that is bad. When I think of the chimneys of Tattleton against that sunset and the darkness gathering round, like the great picture of Tintoretto, I do ask myself will the brotherhood of men be crucified again on the chimneys of the great manufacturing works?"

The Doctor did not reply, but asked the Vicar what his answer to that question might be. The Vicar, who had taken little part in the conversation, shook his head and said, "I think men are much the same all the world over; human nature changes very slowly. The growth of industry and the march of science has brought more material comfort and greater understanding of the forces of Nature and how to use them, but I doubt if they have added much to our spiritual growth, though I believe they will. My father was a scientist, and I have always had a leaning towards science which makes me optimistic in that direction. I hope much will come from better education and better laws, but even so the welfare of all depends on the conduct of each individual, or, in other words, the regeneration of man must be from within not from without."

The Professor, who had listened to this dissertation rather impatiently, said, "That is so, of course; people

like the Joblings must think of the others and not always of themselves; nevertheless, you do not see the danger of this sudden increase of power over the forces of Nature and this great struggle for wealth that has come with it. But it makes nothings, you will always think different; there is only one person that I do agree with"—here the Professor's face expanded and a large smile spread slowly over his face—"and that is myself."

The Doctor looked quizzically at him, and the fable of the frog and the ox passed through his mind, but all he said was, "There is nothing like thinking one is always right; it helps us to digest many things besides the liver sausage."

The Professor subsided slowly, and then observed, "Our friend the Doctor does like to prick all our bubbles with his lancet. Now we shall have a little music; we shall go to the music-room and you shall take your pipes and sit by the fire while I shall play to you some Beethoven. The old Germany of Beethoven and Mozart has gone, the Prussian soldiers do push the citizens off the pavements into the streets, but we still possess the old music. I do remember that the first time I did play to you, Doctor, you did sleep."

"So I did, but the liver sausage will keep me awake this time. They said in Tattlefold that the first time you were in the church you went to sleep while Father Tim was preaching."

"Soh! They do tell many tales in Tattlefold. Nevertheless, Father Tim did preach forty minutes—so my wife did tell me after."

"Which shows you were asleep."

"Ach, Soh! There must have been haggis in the air."

CHAPTER III

A LANCASHIRE "BURYING"

STRANGERS are apt to mistake the straightforward, abrupt speech of Lancashire people for intentional rudeness, and fail to detect the real warmth of heart which is so often hidden under a rough, shy manner. The Lancashire Buryings have also been the subject of much misrepresentation. It is true that the hospitality shown on these occasions was often carried to excess, but it should be remembered that it was a village custom.

The inhabitants of Tattlefold expected John Skinner to show a fitting regard for his late wife by providing a fine funeral with plenty of "me-at an' drink arterwards." They expected this, because he had inherited a small farm with a coal-carting business, and his wife had brought him money; also he had been a careful man and there were no children to provide for.

John Skinner's niece, Sarah Broadbeam, undertook the entertainment of the guests after the funeral was over. She had been Epsie's greatest friend, and was also a most capable woman; she had shown her capacity by bringing ten children into the world and rearing them all in the fear of God and of her own ministrations, including "th' flat o' th' hond on th' reet spot," much to their lasting advantage. When Sarah took charge of the arrangements she told her

uncle she would have nothing to do with the entertainment if it was held in the public-house.

"Nay, Uncle John," she said, "Epsie wur in th' choir an' Sunday School afore hoo marrit thee; hoo wur weel respectit, an' hoo wur a good wife to thee; yo mun have no doin's at th' pub. No, Uncle John, I'll tell yo what we'll do; we mun turn eawt th' owd granary an' put tables in, and give um tea an' pork pies an' taytotal drinks, such as port, sherry, white wine and beer. We mun have no spirruts."

Uncle John protested, but she was determined that no one should "get more till they could howd." The only concession she made was that there should be a limited amount of gin, for, as her uncle truly remarked, "Th' owd fowk'll expect Methody Cream in their tay."

Mrs. Broadbeam was especially pleased to find that Epsie had made her Christmas puddings and three large currant cakes just before her last illness; that alone would make the occasion a memorable one.

The day of the funeral was unusually bright for the time of year, and the distant hills stood out clear against the sky. The service was held in the old church, and as it was Saturday the church was full. After the service the choir sang a hymn at the graveside and many of the villagers followed the old custom of throwing sprigs of box into the grave. When earth was thrown on to the coffin the sound reminded the Vicar of the Professor's grim account of the evening before, and he wondered what John Skinner was thinking of as he stood looking into his wife's grave with such a rigid look of determination to show no feeling.

After the funeral there was a large gathering of friends and relations at the farm. Mrs. Broadbeam

kept a strict watch on everything. When she saw Susannah coming forward with an irrepressible look of ministration to greet Uncle John she felt it was time to intervene, so she turned to Silas and said, "Yo mun 'elp me with Susannah; hoo'l oopset Uncle John unless we keep 'er in hond."

Susannah was approaching Uncle John with the best of intentions. Though it was years since Mrs. Broadbeam had frustrated her attempt to marry him she continued to regard him with a teetotal eye. As to his marriage with Epsie that was the Lord's doing. He had seen fit to take John Skinner from her and give her Skewgill instead, and she was well content. It was all for the best. But now, the spirit was moving within her, and she determined to improve the occasion. She went up to John, shook his hand impressively, then greeted him earnestly.

"John Skinner, the hand of the Lord is heavy upon you to-day, but I trust this affliction will prove a means of grace and not a means of backsliding to the public-house. Before you married Hephzibah Sharples the public-house was a great snare in your path."

Mrs. Broadbeam now intervened. "Neaw, Susannah," she said, "just yo let John be; I reckon he's not in a mood for worritin'."

"Sarah Broadbeam, I have no desire to worry John Skinner, far be it from me to do so; I would save his soul alive from the devil who goes roaring about in public-houses seeking whom he may devour."

"Don't be a fule, Susannah, this ain't a pub; yo'd best leave his soul alone, Passon'll see to thot. Just yo let 'im be."

"Sarah Broadbeam, I know what a snare the public-house was to him before he married Hephzibah Sharples. All I wish to say to him now is, our Young

Teetotallers are always ready to stretch out a saving hand to him."

"Weel, I'm dommed!" exclaimed Uncle John. Before he could get another word in Mrs. Broadbeam and Silas closed in on Susannah and led her firmly away, while Mrs. Broadbeam admonished her with, "Weel, Susannah, I never did; of aw as I ever 'eard at a Burying thot beats um all. Yore Young Teetotallers ud turn a Seraph sour, they would thot. Neaw just yo coom an' 'ave a bit o' currant cake; it wur corpse's own bakin'."

"Sarah Broadbeam, there is a time for everything. This is no time for currant cake."

"Just 'ave a taste, it'll do yo good, Susannah. I tell yo it wur corpse's own bakin', it wur thot."

"Sarah Broadbeam, my heart is too full for currant cake."

"Weel, Susannah, I didn't know as yo 'ad indergestiun, tho' now yo speak of it I see as yo do look a bit red in the nose. Coom an' 'ave a cup o' tay wi' just the leastest taste o' Methody Cream intil it."

"Methody Cream! Sarah Broadbeam, may the Lord forgive you. Where is Skewgill? He will be terribly upset if they give him Methody Cream."

"Yo'll find Skewgill i' th' 'ouse I'm thinkin'; 'appen he's 'avin' a sup o' port wine."

That disposed of Susannah, but soon after that Mrs. Broadbeam's father, old Sim Shivershins, hurried towards her with a very red face choking and struggling to speak. All she could make out was, "Pizen! Summat's wrong inside! They've pizened me!"

"Doan be a fule, feyther. What 'ast done?"

"It wur in th' cream. It mun be Prooshian Acid, my meawth be aw afire."

Mrs. Broadbeam's face relaxed, she put her hands to her sides and shook with uncontrollable laughter.

"It's aw reet, feyther. Doan be aireated. I 'eard as yo and Silas had got holt on some extry Methody Cream, an' I asked th' Weasel to see as no 'arm coom by it. I said he'd better keep an eye on yo, an' I reckon he 'as. I mind now as he arst for some red pepper, an' I reckon he's got holt on some. Never mind, feyther, it'll do you no harm."

"No 'arm be dommed! It wur a darned nasty trick to play at a burying. If I wur twenty year younger I'd warm 'is meawth for him an' summat else besides, I wud thot."

"Weel, weel, feyther; best thing as yo con do is to get holt on a crust o' bread an' chew it weel, same as Mr. Gladstone does; it'll tak' fire eawt o' yore meawth, it will thot."

Mrs. Broadbeam smiled when her father followed her advice, and, turning to one of her daughters, she said, "Theer's nowt like fillin' a man's meawth to keep 'is tongue from waggin', though I doubt it ud tak' a lot to fill Gladstone's meawth."

After the company had gone, Mrs. Broadbeam and her helpers worked on into the night so as to clear everything up before Sunday morning, for she held that no good luck ever came of any work which was done on that day. Meantime she arranged that Silas should stay and keep John company; she made them as comfortable as she could in a little room at the back, where John kept his papers and drugs "for th' be-asts."

The floor of this room was flagged, and in the middle there was a heavy wooden table with a brass pestle and mortar on it, used for mixing drugs; also on a shelf near by there were a number of rough files, made

by running skewers through wooden discs, all loaded up with dirty papers. Against the wall at the end of the room stood an old, worm-eaten desk with a hinged fall lid; in this John kept his more important papers and accounts. Over the mantelpiece a number of hooks had been driven into the wall to hold long clay pipes, whips and various odds and ends; and on the mantelpiece there was a china cow, the sole ornament in the room with the exception of a large coloured lithograph of a prize bull which had been cut out of an illustrated paper, varnished and roughly framed.

The room was not a comfortable one to sit in, but the old men were out of the way there, and Mrs. Broadbeam saw to it that they were not disturbed. She brought in two polished wooden armchairs and set a jug of beer and a couple of clay pipes on the mantelpiece. As she said afterwards, "They did look lost, but it wur aw as I could do for um."

The two old friends sat smoking for a long time without saying a word. At last John got up and poured out some ale, saying as he did so, "I reckon thou'rt dry." In return Silas said, "Thankee," emptied his glass, and then continued, "Aye, lad, I'm dry, I am thot; it's been a weary day." John poured out another glass; after that they remained silent again. At last Silas ventured, "John!"

"Aye, lad!"

"I reckon I wur most as fond of Epsie as yo wur."

"Aye, lad, I knowed thot."

"Weel, John, we mun mak the best of it, theer's nowt else as we con do. Susannah wur a fule, but hoo meant weel. We mun try an' keep on as Epsie had a mind as we should."

"Aye, lad—— If we con."

"We mun! but it'll be noan so easy. We mun help one another, an' I'm thinkin' yo mun 'ave some kind of a woman to keep th' house for yo."

"Time enough to think of that, Si. Time enough, I tell thee."

"I've thowt o' thot, an' I dunnat know as theer is time enough. Maybe Susannah'll coom moidering reawnt yo if yo doan mind. If she does it'll be noan so easy to keep out of th' pub. Yo mun 'ave a watch-dog to keep others from sniffin' reawnt yo."

Another long silence followed which John broke at last. "What wur't thinkin' on, Si?"

"Weel, John, yo might do worse than get Sal's owdest lass to keep house for yo; or theer's Ann Sharples, Epsie's brother's widder. I reckon now 'er datter's marrit hoo'll be fain to give up keepin' lodgers."

"Nay, nay, Si; Ann be welly as ready with her tongue as her sister Jane at the Hall."

"Aye, John, maybe both Ann and Jane are a bit ready with their tongues, but they be jannock, an' they've plenty of horse sense. Any road, thee knows Ann; hoo'd mind th' house an' hoo'd keep Susannah an' thot sort from messing reawnt an' moidering yo. Yo mun think abeawt it an' talk it over wi' Sal. Yo'll want someone to keep flies off yo. Yo will thot."

CHAPTER IV

GOLDMARK HALL

SOME two miles south of Tattleton Goldmark Hall, the mansion of the Joblings, stood on the crest of a slight eminence which overlooked the valley of the Tat from the west. The grounds in front of the house sloped gently towards the valley, and more steeply towards a clough on the south, where two miniature lakes had been formed by damming up a brook that ran down into the river. Artificial rocks and islands rose out of these lakes and a Gothic boathouse figured prominently on the shore nearest the mansion. A couple of Swiss Châlets showed up on the other side above a gorge of artificial rock where boats could pass from one lake to the other.

There was also a sham ruin of a Norman Castle at the end of the gorge, and a concrete waterfall below the lakes. The top of the slope above the Swiss Châlets was crowned by a Greek Temple. All this had been so cleverly planned that Mr. Jobling could stand on the stone steps in front of his mansion and point out the various attractions to his amazed guests; while in the distance the spires and chimneys of Wiggleton could be seen, four miles farther to the south.

The mansion itself was built of ordinary bricks made from the local clay, and its walls were faced with stucco. It looked south-east, and the central

part stood out before a spacious hall so as to form a heavy pillared portico. Directly behind the hall there was a courtyard with a fountain in the centre, a figure of Neptune spouting water, which malicious people said was typical of Mr. Jobling, chairman of many companies. On the north-east side of the hall there was a morning-room and a library, and from the windows of these Tattleton could be seen. Most of the books in the library were splendidly bound in calf, with elaborate gold tooling, while in the centre of this room there was a great square table inlaid with gold and ivory on which stood a large and complacent bust of Mr. Jobling. The hall and the passage round the courtyard afforded immediate entrance to all the entertaining rooms, including a fine ballroom and a billiard-room at the back.

Mr. Jobling, the presiding genius of all this magnificence, was of about medium height, broad and decidedly stout; he had a pink skin, red hair, and small fiery eyes which seemed to stand out when he was excited. He was not an ill-natured man, but he had a distinctly aggressive manner; he considered he was born to command, and posed accordingly, but all he achieved was an appearance of obstinate self-assertion. His wife, who failed to accept him at his own valuation, was a tall woman; she had been slender and graceful, her features were regular, and she possessed a wealth of golden hair and a bovine disposition. Mr. Jobling had married her for her good looks, and considered himself fortunate, for she still retained some of her former beauty, though she had expanded with prosperity.

The Joblings had three daughters and one son. The daughters inherited their mother's good looks, and her golden hair. Mr. Jobling called them his

three graces, and had them painted as such by an indifferent artist recommended by a brother alderman, who posed as an authority on art. His eldest daughter was born one night when an Aurora Borealis appeared that filled the old folk of Tattlefold with fears about the end of the world, but Mr. Jobling had hailed it as a happy augury, and had christened his child Aurora accordingly.

Aurora was really a very fine young woman with splendid ruddy gold hair. She completely overshadowed her younger sisters; but Mr. Jobling had not yet succeeded in arranging a suitable marriage for her, although he had provided her two sisters with rich husbands as soon as they left school. This was a matter that concerned him greatly, for he did not understand how one of his daughters could fail to secure the best market for her attractions. Aurora was not only beautiful, but she had a fine soprano voice which ought to have been a certain guarantee of an excellent marriage.

Mr. Jobling took great pains to point that out, but Aurora had always pursued a line of her own, and it was by no means one that Mr. Jobling would have chosen for her. A friend of hers was an ardent member of the women's rights movement, and though Aurora refused to join the movement, she became interested in it, and went to the General Hospital in Wiggleton to be trained as a nurse.

Egbert was the youngest member of the family. He had been too delicate to send to school, so he was kept at home and spoilt. His sisters called him Eggy because he had remained in the home nest; later on he fancied himself as a lady-killer, and imagined that a habit of twisting his yellow moustache fascinated the girls. The only other inmate of the house was Mrs.

Jobling's father, who was rather deaf, and had a disconcerting habit of interrupting conversation. His chief interest in life had been the making and hoarding of money, but he was a shrewd observer and took a curious interest in others.

On the Saturday afternoon when John Skinner's wife was buried at Tattlefold Mr. Jobling was walking impatiently to and fro in front of his mansion. He was waiting for someone, and he was not accustomed to be kept waiting. The unwonted beauty of the day had little effect on him; his mind was occupied with a more important matter, the decoration of his ballroom. One of his friends, the alderman who posed as a connoisseur, had expressed an opinion that the room would be greatly improved if the walls were covered with pictures. Mr. Jobling discussed the matter with his wife, and finally determined to consult the architect who had carried out his wishes so cleverly.

To prevent any misunderstanding he wrote him a letter, of which he kept a tissue copy, inquiring about the cost of covering the walls with acknowledged masterpieces, and asking how much that would work out per square foot of wall; or if there was any other way of decorating the room which would be more striking, something really tasty, and better worth the money spent. After many communications and discussions he determined to consider the question of frescoes, and accepted the architect's suggestion that he should arrange with someone who could do that kind of thing to come and see him on the spot.

As Mr. Jobling walked up and down the terrace he began to regret that he had committed himself so far. Who was this man that was coming to see him? He was already half an hour late! Just as Mr. Jobling

was working himself up into a state of angry annoyance he saw a young man striding up the drive swinging a walking-stick. As the young man drew near Mr. Jobling noticed that he had very long legs, clad in tweed knickerbockers, that he wore a tweed coat, with an old leather satchel slung over his shoulders, a slouch hat, and—actually—a red tie round his neck. This could not possibly be the man sent by the architect to see him—Josiah Jobling, of Goldmark Hall.

The young man walked straight up to him with a merry smile and said: "Are you Mr. Jobling? I have come to see you about the ballroom." And before Mr. Jobling could answer his hand was grasped and squeezed till the bones ached, while the young man continued, "A fine situation, sir, but a curious country. Coming from Tattlefold I passed through Tattleton; a strange place that, Ruskin would call it a Hell Hole."

This was too much for Mr. Jobling. He put on his favourite magisterial look and, fixing a withering glance on the young fellow, said, "Tattleton, young sir, is becoming one of the greatest centres of northern industry. A very remarkable centre, sir."

The young man laughed gaily and replied, "A remarkable *scenter*!—I should just think it was. I should call it a stinker. That horrible alkali smoke nearly asphyxiated us in Tattlefold last night. If I was the Squire I'd pull that beastly new chimney down."

"Pull that chimney down! Squire, indeed! He's a back number, so's Tattlefold. —Beastly chimney!—Why, that's *my* chimney. The chimney of our new Alkali Works. I am the chairman of that works. I had that chimney specially built. I passed the plans. It is acknowledged to be the finest chimney in the

county. It was built regardless of expense. Regardless of expense, sir. Think of that. Few firms could afford such a chimney. It was the highest in the world. It is still the highest in the county. It's known everywhere as 'Jobling's chimney'."

Mr. Jobling stopped. The young man was smiling at him. Actually smiling at him, Josiah Jobling. The smile puzzled him, it was genial and not provocative, rather like the joyous smile of a child that sees a new toy for the first time and wants to play with it. Then the monstrosity of the situation struck Mr. Jobling afresh and, resuming the magisterial attitude with which he was accustomed to subdue young delinquents, he addressed the young man severely: "If you were in Tattlefold how comes it that you heard nothing about my chimney? Where—may I ask—did you spend the night?"

"Spend the night!—I spent the night at Tattle Park with my old school friend, Jim Thornton, and his father, the Squire. I wonder they never told me about your chimney, we smelt it right enough."

The effect of this information on Mr. Jobling was remarkable. He reviewed the situation rapidly. He had called the Squire a back number, but he envied him, nevertheless, for the Thorntons were county people, and he had not been able to get into that select circle, although his name appeared on the top of every subscription list. Mr. Jobling liked to get value back for money spent, and this young man had come, hall-marked, direct from heaven; or at least from Tattle Park, which was even more desirable from Mr. Jobling's point of view. All this and more flashed through the business department of his brain, but he determined to put a test question to his visitor and said, "A Miss Penny called on me the other day; she

also came from Tattle Hall, a very remarkable lady. Am I right in presuming that she also is an old friend of the Thorntons?"

"She's their governess."

"Oh! Only a governess—I thought she was a friend of the family. I suppose you would like to look at my room now?" So saying, he led the way to the ballroom.

On their way the young fellow looked eagerly round, taking everything in with the quick perception that an artist has of what is ugly and incongruous as well as what is beautiful. Much that he noticed intrigued him, and appealed to his sense of the ridiculous. By the time he reached the ballroom he was ready for anything. There, he was most agreeably surprised. It was so much plainer than he expected. A great oblong room with semi-circular ends and arched ceiling, lighted only from above. Mr. Jobling noticed his surprise, and hastened to explain that the architect had insisted on lighting it from above so that it could be used as a picture gallery as well as a ballroom.

"Splendid. Quite right. It's first-rate. Simply made for frescoes or wall-paintings. We must have nymphs and shepherds dancing round the walls, though I'd sooner paint saints and angels and turn it into a chapel; you could read prayers here, you know. I'd heard of the room, of course, but had no idea it was anything like this. I've roughed out one or two things for you to see. We might as well look at them. See what you think of them and what you would like."

Whipping a roll out of his bag he unfolded it swiftly and soon had a number of sketches lying about on the floor round him. Picking one up quickly he hurried on, "This is the one. You see here you have——"

Mr. Jobling stood aghast and interjected, "But the figures are naked! Most improper! Quite impossible!"

The young artist only laughed and raced on. "Quite so. They are not clothed yet. I'll soon put the clothes on for you. Everything strictly proper. All etceteras covered up. *Comprenez?*"

"What's that?"

"Oh! You'll see it's all right. I left the clothes off till I knew if you liked gods or saints best. Stay! I have an idea. What do you say to a group of yourself and family kneeling with saints round, a blaze of golden light above with lots of baby angels flying about? It's what the old Italian Masters would have done. Ruskin'll tell you all about it. What do you say?"

"I think we should look funny all kneeling. You might have some of us standing. You could paint me standing alone in the middle of my family. Don't you think that would look better?"

"I hardly know. I could do it, of course; but, you see, you are not God Almighty, it wouldn't do to have all your family kneeling round you. I could arrange you and your wife as Jupiter and Juno greeting your three daughters; they could appear as the Three Graces introduced by your son; I'd paint him as Mercury."

"I suppose that is some historical subject?"

"No. At least, I don't think so; but you could say it was the latest bas-relief dug up in Asia Minor or Greece. None of your friends would be any the wiser; besides, it might make them curious, create interest. *Comprenez?*"

The young fellow's smile was so broad it seemed to embrace Mr. Jobling as he continued: "I'll tell you what I'll do, I'll think it over and make more

sketches now I've seen the room and know what you want. I'll have them ready in about a week."

"Very well, young man. I rather like the idea of Jupiter and Juno, but we must be properly clothed."

"Right you are. I'll put a few clothes on, and with a cloud or two thrown in you'll look splendid. I'll cover you all up. You'll see. It'll be all right. You'll like it when it's done. I should like to make some notes, and take a few particulars of the room if you've nothing more you wish to say to me."

"I don't know that I have, young man. Didn't Jupiter make thunderbolts?"

"Yes, lots of them, but I'm afraid we must leave them out. I could show, of course, a flash of lightning striking your chimney."

Mr. Jobling looked surprised, but, seeing that the youth appeared profoundly serious, he replied, "Very well, if you can have the sketches ready by next Saturday we can decide then what to do. I should like the family group, especially as you say the Italians had them. I haven't read Ruskin, but my daughters insisted on my getting his books, and I have had them all specially bound in vellum; they are somewhere in the library." The young man greeted this with a disconcerting smile, so Mr. Jobling concluded rather suddenly, "I'll say good-bye to you now as I have some very important matters that I must attend to."

When Mr. Jobling left the room his thoughts might be summed up as follows: he could not quite make the young fellow out, but he intended to approach the Thorntons through him; in any case he would get his money's worth out of the affair somehow. The fact still remained that Mr. Jobling's brain had been unable to register a tissue copy of the young artist; he had not even got his name.

CHAPTER V

TATTLE HALL

ONCE upon a time the River Tat was a merry, sparkling salmon stream with many rapids and fine pools. It hurried down past Tattlefold, rushed headlong against the Great Barrier fault, whirled round the Devil's Cauldron, then, passing through red sandstone channels and chasms, swept in one great semicircle across the valley and back again to the eastern side. When the Mechanical Revolution came, the progress of industry destroyed the sparkling salmon river and changed it into a blue-black, fetid stream charged with the drainage from dyeworks and thickened by alkali refuse, a stream that poisoned the air with its rank odour and infected everything on which its foul spray fell. Within the great semicircle of the river lay Tattle Park.

The Hall was situated some two hundred yards to the south of the Great Barrier fault which rose in a steep cliff above the Cauldron. Between the cliff and the Hall a belt of trees skirted the river and provided a shelter from the northern blasts which came down the valley. Tattle Hall was a fine example of north-country black and white; it still retained much of its original beauty, though dimmed by smoke and rendered forlorn by the number of dead and dying trees around. There was something tragic in the way the fine old Hall looked towards the new alkali chimney

that was devastating the park in front with its poisonous smoke. Natural decay of age may bring a beauty that mitigates regret and brings a greater charm of colour and a deeper sense of peace, but the desolation wrought by the hand of Industrialism affords no mitigation.

Thoughts of that kind, however, did not trouble the Squire's grandson as he ran across the lawn in front of the house with a billhook in his hand. He had hoped to get Sam Broadbeam, the stalwart farm bailiff, to come and help him to cut down the biggest dead tree in the park, but unfortunately Sam felt obliged to attend the funeral of Mrs. Skinner that afternoon. This would have been a great disappointment to Dick if his mother had not come forward with the suggestion that they should go out together and she would watch him cut down a small tree close to the Hall and lop off the branches for a bonfire.

Dick stopped in front of the house, waved his arms, then ran in and shouted, "Come along, mother, if you don't it'll be dark before we get the tree down. I promised to wait, but I must begin now. It's quite safe. Where's Miss Penny?"

Mistress Polly came briskly down the stairs and answered, "All right, my boy, we won't wait for Miss Penny. She went to the village to see a sick person; she said it was such a beautiful afternoon she must not waste it."

"Waste it, mother! I don't see why she need bother about other people. She's always looking after sick people or reading to grandpa."

"Or looking after you, sonnie."

"Of course. She's my governess."

"Some day you'll be thankful for that, but I think it's time you were sent to school, all the same."

"Oh no, mother."

"Oh yes, sonnie. That's the tree, is it? We must mind which way it falls."

"Of course, we must. It'll fall that way, out on the lawn. You'll see it's all right. I've got the rope ready fixed, high up there in the fork; when the tree's nearly cut through we'll pull it down all right. I've had a lot of practice with Sam and Uncle Jim; you needn't be afraid."

"Very well, my boy; only do take care and not cut yourself."

"Cut myself! Why, mother, Sam let me try his big axe the other day. Cut myself! As if I was clumsy as a girl!"

"Are girls clumsy?"

"Of course, they are. They can't even drive a nail in straight." Dick started cutting vigorously, and continued to talk in a desultory way, "It was beastly yesterday. That stinking alkali smoke. I should like to smash old Jobling's chimney for him."

"Would you like to smash Horace Temple's chimney?"

"Of course not, mother."

"Why not, sonnie?"

"Why not? Because old Jobling's a bounder and Horace isn't. That's why."

"How do you know Mr. Jobling is a bounder?"

"Uncle Jim said so."

"Did he tell you what a bounder was?"

"Not exactly. He just said a bounder wasn't a gentleman, and a gentleman was a gentleman, and that was all about it, and if I asked no more questions I'd hear no lies. All the same, mother, what is a gentleman, exactly?"

"A gentleman is one who considers other people

and isn't always thinking about himself. That's simple enough, isn't it, sonnie?"

Dick thought for a moment or two and then answered, "I don't think it's easy, mother, but then, a boy isn't expected to be exactly a gentleman. I suppose a lady's the same kind of thing only more so, only she's not a he."

"That's about it, sonnie."

"Then, Miss Penny's exactly a lady?"

"She is my dear, exactly; and there she is walking across the lawn in a brown study."

"She's always like that, mother, when she's not looking after someone. Miss Penny, Miss Penny! Here we are."

A large elderly lady, dressed in faded black silk, turned slowly towards them as if waking from a dream. As she approached she seemed to expand like a great sunflower. She was evidently shortsighted, but as she drew near a benign smile lit up her wise old face which seemed to owe its intense earnestness to the enormous curling nose which dominated it.

Dick greeted her insistently. "You're only just in time, Miss Penny. The tree's nearly through. I think it'll come now. I'll run in and tell grandpa to look out of the window. When I come back, if you'll put your weight on the rope it'll come down all right."

He was off before Miss Penny could answer, but she gazed intently in the direction he had gone, and remarked, "Richard is full of spirit. I think he will grow up a useful man, but I wish he would pay more attention to his Latin." Then slowly shaking her head she added, half to herself, "It may be that I am too old to teach him. His arithmetic is very good, but he learns that almost without help; his English

Grammar and spelling are very weak. I fear I am unable to interest him in either."

Then, waking up from her reverie, she said: "I trust I have not kept you waiting. I found poor old Betty so depressed and burdened with rheumatism that I could not leave her. I had to stay while she told me all her troubles; I think it relieved her to do so. Then I read while she rested. She was so grateful to you for the red flannel."

"I'm afraid, Miss Penny, these old people take advantage of you."

"Don't say that. Don't say that. They have so little, so very little. Their life is so hard. I sometimes think that we, who have so much, hardly understand."

Further conversation was not possible, for Dick now ran up exclaiming, "Grandpa's looking. Hold on, Miss Penny. Here's the rope. No, take hold here. Now pull when I say pull. Pull, mother—pull—pull! Stop a second, I'll have another chop, then it'll come—it was nearly over. Now try again. Pull—it's cracking!" There was a crash. "Look," cried Dick, "Grandpa's waving. I knew he'd like to see it fall. I wish it had been old Jobling's chimney; Grandpa would like to see that come over smash. Wouldn't he, mother?"

When Dick called his mother out of the house she had left the Squire in his smoking-room; he generally sat there in the afternoon and either dozed or read the papers in a desultory way, his chief interest being in the agricultural and sporting news. He spent most of his mornings in going round the farm and the estate, or in paying an occasional visit to the colliery.

Blessed with a strong frame and a tough constitution, Squire Thornton carried his years well, notwithstanding

his periodical attacks of gout. He held that there was no harm in a glass of good old port, and drank several glasses every day to show the reasonableness of that opinion. After his daughter-in-law, Mistress Polly, went out, Jane, the factotum of the Hall, came to the door of the smoking-room and gave it a smart rat-tat with her knuckles. There was no mistaking her knock, and the squire's response was characteristic. "Come in, Jane, and don't make such a damned row. I'm not deaf."

"No, sir. Certainly not," she replied. "Not you. Nor like to be, neither."

"What have you come about?"

"To see if your fire's in."

"The fire's right enough. Mistress Polly saw to that. You all look after me like a set of cats watching a mouse."

"There's not much of the mouse in you, sir. The Doctor wouldn't want to take good blood out of your veins if there was. Not that I hold with that; I wouldn't let him do it if it was me—doctor or no doctor."

"Sit down, Jane; you've done enough racketing about this week."

"Thank you, sir. If I didn't racket things wouldn't get done in this house, though I say it as shouldn't. My mother used to say, 'Whether we're here or hereafter there's no manner of use expecting a chimney-piece to dust itself, for it won't do no such thing, and there's no use expecting it to do it. Someone's got to work.' No, not likely the work would get done in this house if someone didn't look after it, and only Mistress Polly and I can do that, and I'm getting too old to racket round as I used to. There's some in this house as don't racket round as they should. All that young girls think of now-a-days is how they can

get their work done so as they can get off. My mother used to say, 'Good work's never done'."

"Damn it all, Jane, don't turn Methody parson."

"No, sir, not likely. I know my place better than that. It's a good thing for the men that the women haven't the run of the pulpit; if they got up there the men would hear what they don't want to hear. A few women in the pulpit like Miss Lydia Becker would scare the men stiff. Women's tongues are quicker than men's, and their wits, too, for that matter. Peter and Paul knew what they were about when they kept the women Dorcassing and such like. Men always want their own way whether it's a good one or not. Peter didn't hold the keys for nothing."

"Damn it all, Jane, you are a regular free-thinker."

"No, sir, not no ways. I keep such thoughts mostly to myself. Best so. I've served in this house since you were a boy. I know my place, and I mean no disrespect though I'm bound to speak out at times. Maybe I'm a bit of a scold with the girls, but it does them good, and I only want to do what's right by you."

"I know that, Jane; I know that well enough. I shall never forget how you have stood by us all through. Those were sad times when we lost Mr. Jack. You took to Mistress Polly from the first. I think my wife understood afterwards."

"Poor lady, she was trying at times, though I say it as shouldn't. She put all her eggs in one basket, and when the bottom fell out she'd nothing to live for. She spoilt Mr. Jack from the first, and she drove me nearly crazy when Mistress Polly came. After Mr. Jack had gone she didn't care about anything, and I couldn't leave you in all that trouble. Not likely. Mistress Polly is a lady, if ever there was one. There

are some as still say she isn't because she was a barmaid. I never understood why her mother kept an inn; she had money and was a sensible woman, and had Mistress Polly well educated and all. I suppose it was marrying that ravaging, ranting American that upset her notions."

"Damn it all, Jane, he was not half a bad sort. A bit fast, but what of that? He came of a good family in the south."

"That's where it is, sir. They told me he kept a set of slaves. You can't expect much of a man that goes about with a horse-whip in his hand to lay on the backs of those that work for him. Americans are like that. Savages, I call them. I don't wonder she came back to England with Mistress Polly and never saw him again."

"You've got hold of the wrong end of the stick, Jane. He was right enough. I expect it was the family over there that made the trouble. I never heard, though. Polly was too young to remember. If she's heard anything since she's kept it to herself."

"And quite right too, sir. Tattlefold's full of gossip. They've got a fine tale out now how Mr. Jim was at the theatre in Wiggleton after a football match, and that little yellow rat of a Jobling was sitting in front with more liquor in him than he could carry. Mr. Jim overheard him say as Mistress Polly was nothing but a barmaid, so Mr. Jim ups and takes him by the scruff of the neck, and whips him over the baluster and holds him over the pit, and says he'd let him drop if he didn't say as he was a liar."

"The devil he did! Ha, ha! Tattlefold's not changed yet. Jim told me all about it in case I should hear. He only took hold of the little beast by the shoulder, and said: 'You little cad, you don't know what

a lady is. If you don't keep your mouth shut you'll find some of us will see that you do.'"

"So he told me, sir, something of the kind, but he couldn't deny as little Joblings cried out like a shot rabbit when he took hold of him. They say it served him right, and I'm not one to say as it didn't. They generally put two and two together in Tattlefold and add a couple of oughts on before they have done. I'm sorry for Miss Aurora; a fine girl like that to have such a brother! They say as it's she as should have the breeches on."

While Dick was lopping the branches off the tree Jim came across the lawn on his way back from the football field. More than ten years had passed since he was a spirited boy, full of mischief, who had posed as the ghost of the Hall to scare his aunts; now he was a hefty young man with a purposeful look of determination about him.

"Hello, Polly!" he cried, "What's the youngster up to?"

Dick answered at once, "Cutting wood for the bonfire. Can't you see, silly?"

Jim laughed and said, "Now, young 'un, none of your cheek; little boys should be seen and not heard. Mind you don't cut yourself."

Polly interposed. "Don't tease him, Jim."

"All right. Here, young 'un, you'd better let me give you a hand."

But Polly intervened again. "Let him finish it, Jim; I expect your father will be glad to see you."

Jim went into the house. When he entered the smoking-room his father looked at him and said: "Damn it all, Jim, you are in a mess. Did you lick them?"

"No, we'd a fine game, though; we were all right forward, but their half-backs were too good for us.

Our fellows are coming on splendidly, considering it's only their second season and they never played the game before. They are keen enough; the colliers take to football like ducks to water."

"How much did they beat you by?"

"A goal and a try; we might have done worse. If only Guy had played with us it might have made all the difference. He was our best half at school. I suppose he was bound to go and see old Jobling about that beastly ballroom. Why Jobling should fix on Saturday I don't know; he might have a little consideration for others."

"Well, Jim, I'm sorry you lost; you'd better go now and take those dirty boots off and clean yourself up a bit."

After Jim left the room his father remained unusually thoughtful. Jane had stirred up old memories; it still hurt him to recall how he allowed his wife to spoil their eldest son, Jack. If only she had treated Polly fairly Jack might have been kept straight. Jim was a young monkey then, but fortunately no one spoilt him, and he had turned out a fine young fellow. The Professor had always said he would. Now there was Jim's future to think of.

Jim was doing very well at the engineering works, and Herbert Temple and Frank Dixon were managing the colliery all right. It might be best to leave Jim at the engineering works; but there was all that family money in the colliery. If Dick grew up like Jim it would be all right—if not? But Dick had every chance; Polly would never let him be spoilt. The Squire grew tired of thinking, it made him sleepy. His mind wandered to Guy Hetheridge. A good fellow that, but a queer one; these artists were always queer. It was funny that Jim should make friends

with an artist. Jim was not much of a hand at drawing, except mechanical drawing. What did Jobling want with Hetheridge? Jobling, who thought of nothing but his own wealth and importance—Jobling—Jobling!—The Squire's head nodded, and as he dozed in his chair his meditations ceased.

At the dinner-table afterwards Jim tried to draw Hetheridge into a description of his visit to Goldmark Hall, but the latter diverted the conversation by telling them how greatly Mr. Jobling had been impressed with Miss Penny. This was followed by a shower of questions. "When did you see him, Miss Penny? Did you get anything out of him for your sick people? Did you see anything of the others? What's he like? Did you see that little beast, his son? Did you tell him his chimney stank?"

Miss Penny was bewildered at first, but when the last question came from young Dick, she replied, "No, dear, I should never think of being so rude as to tell him his chimney stank." Then, turning to the Squire, she continued, "The object of my visit was to get some assistance for one of his workers who is ill and has a young family dependent on him, a very sad case. Mr. Jobling was rather impatient with me at first, but never in any way rude. I understand he is a very busy man with little time to spare, but the case was such a deserving one that I ventured to speak to him about it. He promised to think it over, but said he preferred to keep his charity in existing channels."

"Existing channels," said Jim; "his own pockets you mean. The old bounder likes others to see all he gives printed on a subscription list."

Miss Penny protested, "I do not think you should say that; we do not know how many private calls are made upon him. He is not popular, and for that

very reason we should be careful in judging him." She continued in an abstracted manner: "I must admit I think he is hard with his workpeople, but I believe that is because he does not realise his responsibilities. I am afraid people whose wealth is newly acquired are often like that, especially now these large business concerns separate the employers from the workers. We should make allowances for such people, and should pity those whose outlook is so limited. I think Mr. Jobling may fairly be looked upon as the victim of circumstances; he appears to be entirely without ideals, and looks on everything as a matter of pounds, shillings and pence. Had we been brought up without any real education, as he has, we might have held the same views. He is not an ill-natured man."

When Miss Penny had concluded Jim said, "Well done, Miss Penny, you have painted the Devil black yet made excuses for him. I wonder what old Jobling would have said if he could have heard you."

Jim sat on smoking with Guy after the others had gone to bed. Jim had noticed how his friend turned the conversation, and he asked him now why he had done so? Guy replied quite frankly, "Because I don't understand Jobling."

"Don't understand him! There's nothing to understand; he's just as full of conceit as an egg's full of meat; he's a regular bounder who stinks of money. The old folk about here call him Stink o' Brass."

"There's more in him than that, Jim. Miss Penny wasn't far out. He interests me."

"You're a queer fellow, Guy. How can he interest you?"

"I don't quite know. For one thing, I never met one of his kind before. Strikes me there's something inside him that isn't able to come out or hasn't been

developed. Anyway, he's a new specimen.—See, Jim?"

"See! How can you expect me to follow all your odd ideas. I was brought up in a matter-of-fact way. I haven't your artistic temperament. You are much quicker than I am. Quicker to see; quicker to feel. More sensitive, in fact."

"I suppose I am more sensitive. It's rather rotten. I think it's partly my bringing up. I had no brothers and sisters to rot me. Before I went to school I lived with older people, and had no companions of my own age. Did I ever tell you about my home life?"

"No. All I know is that your father was either a clergyman or a professor of classics. We never talked of our people at school. You were different from the rest of us although you were so keen on games. There was no one like you for caricatures. Do you remember the one you did of Old Nosey, and how that young ass Gosling let it fall on the floor, right in front of his desk? Ha, ha! Nosey's face was a treat; we thought he'd give you beans."

"So did I. He was awfully decent about it. I remember knocking at his study door afterwards. He received me with a smile and said, 'I showed your portrait of me to the Drawing Master. He tells me you are his most promising pupil, and asked me to be kind to you.' Then old Nosey peered at me through his spectacles and grinned from ear to ear. I thought I was in for no end of a licking, instead of that he went on to say, 'I think in drawing me you exaggerated one of my features; as a punishment for that you will now take this paper and sit down and make a more careful drawing of me. Then, if the Drawing Master is satisfied, we will say no more

about it.' You remember it was framed and hung in the hall with the caricature pasted on the back."

"I remember it well enough. It was decent of Old Nosey, but I don't think he'd have let you off so easily if you hadn't been his pet classical scholar. I suppose you got your classics from your father?"

"I may have done so. At all events, he taught me very thoroughly. He was a first-rate scholar, very enthusiastic, and he enjoyed teaching me. He was much older than my mother, and after his marriage he gave up his living and devoted himself to classics. But for him I don't think I should ever have cared for classics; with art it's different."

"Did you get your art from your mother?"

"I suppose so, but I owed a lot to her brother who was an artist and spent much of his time with us. When I was a child he would take me on his knee and draw all kinds of things for me. Later on I used to watch him painting. When my father died I was sent to school, but most of my holidays were spent with my mother and my uncle. No doubt I owe something to both, for she loved art, though she never learnt to paint. Anyhow, I like art better than anything else, and I mean to have the time of my life decorating old Jobling's ballroom. I'll have no end of larks with it before I have done."

"Now look here, Guy, larks are all very well, but don't put it on too thick with Jobling; if you do you'll regret it. You haven't met the business end of him yet. He's a hard man; even Miss Penny admitted that."

"Thanks, Jim, for your excellent advice. When I've finished I'll get Jobling to invite you to see the room and you can conduct the business for me."

"You mustn't do anything of the kind. I won't

have anything to do with the brute. If I were you I'd have an agreement drawn up in black and white before I'd do a stroke of work for him. You artists are such confoundedly unbusinesslike fellows."

"That's what you would do, Jim. Well, I'm not built that way; I mean to leave it to the architect. I don't care very much so long as I have my own way with the decorations. He'll be obliged to give me something; the architect'll see to that. Besides, I don't think you are fair to Jobling. You don't understand him any more than I do. He's really interested in the room; that's all I know, but I shall feel my way at first. I must keep an eye on his vanity; gild the pill a bit. I'll manage all right."

"Do as you like, Guy; I was only warning you."

"I know that, but it's all very well for you to turn up your nose at people; you've lots of advantages that poor old Jobling never had. You are a lucky dog and don't even know it."

"What on earth do you mean, Guy?"

"What do I mean? Can't you see? You've got a fine old boy for your father, a first-rater for your sister-in-law, and that wise old bird, Miss Penny, hovering around. Then you've got those rugged old village folk in the background, and the Professor, Doctor, Vicar, the Temples and others. You don't know your Mercies, as the Methodies put it."

"Confound it all, Guy, you're indulging in a strain of Skewgill and Company."

"Skewgill? Who's Skewgill?"

"Do you mean to say that I never told you about Skewgill? Skewgill!—Methody Parson, Teetotaller and dealer in Hellfire all rolled in one, and married to the most rabid Teetotaller of the lot, Susannah, a perfect fiend for getting subscriptions."

"Magnificent, Jim. You must introduce me to them."

"I'll see you hanged first. Susannah would turn you round her little finger. She got me to subscribe to her Young Teetotallers."

"You, Jim! Ha, ha! Is James Thornton also among the Teetotallers? Splendid. No more port for you, my boy."

"She's got my father, too."

"Good Lord! She must be a scorcher."

"She landed the Doctor also. Both at one fell swoop—many years ago. There was no end of a rumpus about it among the old toppers."

"Well done, Susannah. Three cheers for Susannah. You must introduce me to her, Jim. I'll paint her as Susannah among the elders, and you shall present it to the Young Teetotallers. Now you mention it, I remember you did once tell me something about one of their Teetotal meetings. You are a lucky dog to be surrounded by such varied specimens of humanity. You must introduce me to them all, and I'll paint them. I'll decorate old Jobling's ballroom with them; that'll fetch him out of his chrysalis state, out of his golden cocoon, then he'll be happy and good ever afterwards. It's going to be a regular fairy tale. 'Who fetched Jobling out of his golden cocoon?'—'I,' said Guy, 'with my little brush I, etc.'—and I'll paint solid old Jim glowering away in the corner with his handkerchief to his nose beside old Jobling's chimney smoking like the devil—Jobling's chimney and you, Jim—both smoking!"

"Oh, shut up, Guy, and come to bed. I wonder why Jobling asked such an idiot as you to decorate his room."

"Ah, why? No, Jim; he didn't ask me. That's the beauty of it. His architect sent me to him, and

I think I have managed to annex him. I'm going to get out a lot of sketches for him to look at, but I mean to go my own way when we've settled what to do. I'll lead him gently on the way I wish him to go. I mean to keep it as dark as I can till the thing's mostly done, but I shall have to feel my way. I'd like to paint the old world and the new; Tattlefold and Tattleton in a kind of allegory. Cloud of smoke. Pillar of Fire. Jobling in the wilderness, picking up bits of the Commandments and trying to piece them together as an antidote to an overdose of Golden Calf. Jobling with a puzzled look on his face, etc., etc."

"So that's your little game? Have you seen Aurora yet?"

"Who's Aurora?"

"Aurora is Jobling's eldest daughter. Before you make up your mind what to do, see Aurora."

"What do you mean, Jim?"

"I mean what I say. *See Aurora.*"

CHAPTER VI

SUNDAY OBSERVANCES—A CONTRAST

ON Sunday Guy Hetheridge was surprised to find that all the members of the household at Tattle Hall were expected to go to church as a matter of course. Even the Squire had sufficiently recovered from his gout to order the family coach—a ponderous affair with a high box seat and a rumble at the back—to take him there. The two young men and Dick went afoot. Jim was soberly attired in a long black coat with a tall top hat. Guy, who was not equally well equipped for so serious an occasion, professed intense admiration, and congratulated him on his funereal appearance.

The church bells were still ringing merrily when they entered the village of Tattlefold, and before they reached the churchyard the family coach passed them and drew up at the gate. Then, with all due ceremony, the butler descended from the box, opened the carriage door and ushered the Squire and Mistress Polly into the church; meanwhile, Jane and one of the maids remained sitting on the rumble until the Squire had passed in. This being the Sunday following the funeral of Mrs. Skinner, the friends and relations of the deceased were already seated in the church.

When the chimes ceased and the five-minute bell began, the busy clatter of the Sunday School scholars

woke the echoes of the old building, and Miss Penny came in with the other teachers. By the time all the young people were settled in their seats the bell stopped and the organist began to play, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

Guy Hetheridge was interested in the proceedings, and he enjoyed watching the old villagers so openly that Jim had to caution him. While Jim was doing that, Silas came up unobserved, plumped a collecting bag down on the seat beside him and nudged his elbow, saying as he did so, "Theer's bag." Though Jim objected, he said, "Thee mun tak' it," and left it, much to Guy's evident amusement.

In his sermon the Vicar alluded to the death of Hephzibah Skinner. He spoke of her quiet useful life and of her simple goodness; then he went on to refer to old Lancashire customs and characteristics which he looked on with approval but which, he regretted, were dying out. He spoke especially of the value of their Sunday Schools, and of the habit of reading the Bible at home, and deprecated the idea that parents might relax home discipline because the state was undertaking the education of the young. He concluded by saying that the discipline of life should begin in the home and continue there. It was a simple sermon, lengthy and rather cold and formal; but the Lancashire workers, who formed the congregation, looked upon the Vicar as an old friend, and were satisfied that he had said what he ought to have said.

During the sermon Guy used his pencil, quite unconscious that he himself was an object of interest. On his way back to the Hall he questioned Jim about the old people; but Dick, who had made up his mind that Guy was a desirable companion, broke in on their

conversation, and, taking Guy's arm, he made him promise to come round the farm buildings in the afternoon in order to hunt rats with his bull-terrier.

After the midday dinner Guy was duly introduced to a great white dog with pink eyes and more bull than terrier in him, the kind of dog that colliers love. Bully walked into the room as if it belonged to him, went up to greet Jim, then returned to Dick and stood eyeing Guy fixedly. At last, having made up his mind that the young man was a suitable person to make friends with, he walked slowly towards him and began to wag his tail. As he did so he seemed to grin from ear to ear. Dogs distrusted that grin; but humans found that it meant a lasting friendship, if discreetly met.

On their way to the farm they passed through the high walled-in garden at the back of the Hall. In former days it had been celebrated for the fruit it produced; but now, owing to the smoke from the chimneys of Tattleton, only raspberries, gooseberries and currants thrive; though apples, pears and even plums continued to give chance crops under the care of an excellent Scottish gardener.

The hot-houses shared the grimy look of their surroundings. Fine bunches of grapes still remained, but even these the gardener would only pass as "no' bad," considering the many syringings necessary to keep the vines clean and the numerous pests he had to contend with, including the much dreaded red spider.

"I'm no' casting blame on the garden, you understand, Master James," he said, "for I cannot but admit that it is reasonably well sheltered, and the soil is by nature a kindly one; neither can I say with truth that the accessories are wanting. The manure that

I am getting from the farm is fine; Samuel lets me choose what I am needing, and I can have as much as I want for the asking. It's no' the want of good soil or manure that's troubling me; it's the chimneys of Tattleton that are on the wrong side of us altogether. The smoke strikes down on the garden, and it isn't honest smoke either; it comes from the alkali works, and it blights everything. The glass-houses, indeed, are no better than riddles; they let in all the damp and the smoke, and it's no' surprising that my grapes are not what they ought to be. Now, if I had grand new houses like Jobling's on the other side of the valley, I could——"

What the gardener could do was unheard, for Jim broke out, "Hang Jobling, I'm sick of him."

"Well, Master James," said the gardener, "I shall not deny that there would be some justification in what you will be saying if it were no' the Sabbath day. Master Jobling has not all the parts of a gentleman, but I'm no' saying it will be entirely his own fault, poor body; I'm thinking he will be root-bound, and it will be overlate the now for potting him up. The world's full of such poor creatures, and it's only to be expectit that when the Almighty takes His rounds, sorting the plants, He will be sair exercised in making a reasonable judgment."

From the garden a cindered road led to the farm-yard, a great stone-cobbled square surrounded with shippons and stables with hay-lofts over them, and all the other necessary buildings. The cobbled yard was wonderfully clean; Sam Broadbeam saw to that; but in spite of all Sam's care, the rats, which infested the old drains leading to the river, gnawed their way into the stables. Bully, who had a keen nose for rats, made for the nearest stable door and began sniffing

under it. Jim held him there while Dick went in and stopped up the holes, then the hunt began. For the next half hour or so Bully and Dick thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Trusses of hay and sacks of corn were turned over, corn bins were moved and sticks were rattled beneath them, until every rat had been dislodged.

After the hunt was over they went to watch the cows milked, and had "a crack" with Sam Broadbeam. Then came afternoon service at the church, for all but the Squire, followed by a heavy tea.

A week-end at Goldmark Hall was a very different affair. Mr. Jobling took himself seriously, and his week-ends heavily, as became one who had been Mayor of Wiggleton. He would never have consented to such a thing as a rat-hunt on Sunday, though it was freely rumoured that his son, Eggy, attended cock-fights held in certain old barns on Sunday afternoons.

After Guy Hetheridge left Goldmark Hall on Saturday, one of the most advanced educationalists in the country arrived; this was no less a personage than Lord Newpen. Mr. Jobling had intended to ask various distinguished people to stay with him over the week-end in order to meet his illustrious guest, but unfortunately Lord Newpen had written to say that he was looking forward to a quiet visit. He said, however, that he would deem it an especial favour if his friend, Dr. Oldbird, could be invited to meet him on Sunday. After the meeting in Tattleton Lord Newpen pleaded fatigue, and on returning to the Hall retired to his bedroom and rang for the butler.

Now, the new butler was a handsome young Irishman who came with such excellent references that Mr. Jobling had engaged him on the spot in spite of his

brogue. He was no stranger to Lord Newpen who greeted him accordingly. "So it's you, Pat?"

"It's myself, sorr, and who else would it be? I hope your Honour's well?"

"I'm well enough, you rascal. I hope you are steadier than you were when I last saw you."

"Sure then, it's myself that's the teetotalter entirely."

"Teetotalter! I've seen your teetotalism often enough, my man."

"Bedad, it's your Honour that knows everything, and I'm thinking you will not be so unkind as to do a poor honest Irish boy a bad turn, and myself having taken the pledge and all. Deed then, you can ask Father O'Fhlarty if you doubt me word."

"Taken the pledge! How often have you done that? Take it and break it, eh?"

"May the saints make your Honour's bed, but it's myself that's become the temperance reformer, the same as Mrs. Skewgill, through her having met me in the street and converted me altogether. Bad luck to her, she got a subscription out of me before I could get away from her."

"Mrs. Skewgill! Then, that must have been her husband that I was introduced to this evening. Methodist Minister, clever talker, keen on education but rather a fanatic, I think."

"Your honour's right; there's a pair of them. They won't let an honest sinner go his own way; they hunt poor lost souls, as they call them, till there's no escape for them."

"So she got a subscription out of you?"

"She did that, bedad. But it was herself that saved me when I came under suspicion of having drink taken. She persuaded the master he was

mistaken in the smell of me, glory be to God! Is there anything I can do for you, sorr?"

"You can take this note to Dr. Oldbird to-morrow morning. I understand he lives near here."

"He does that, sorr."

"And let me see. You are to call me at eight, and breakfast is at nine, and at ten the carriage leaves for church."

"It does that, sorr. Your Honour may be tired in the morning, will I be calling you then?"

"Yes, don't forget."

Next morning the butler informed his master that Lord Newpen was still tired and would spend the morning in his room, so Mr. Jobling and his wife went to church in solitary state. The Goldmark carriage was a very smart turn-out, a new brougham of the very latest kind from London with the rising sun emblazoned on its panels, that being the crest which Mr. Jobling had chosen for himself. The coachman and the footman were splendidly arrayed in blue coats with yellow facings and great gilt buttons, gorgeous waistcoats, white breeches and top boots. The harness was bright silver-gilt.

Mr. Jobling had looked forward to taking Lord Newpen to church, and when the carriage drew up at the front door he looked sadly at his champing steeds, for he felt the show was but a hollow one without the presence of his lordship. And there was reason in his disappointment, for he was Vicar's Warden at the fine new Tattleton church, towards the building of which he had been the chief subscriber. He had also given the large four-manual organ with endless stops and couplers, a regular "Hallelujah Organ," by a local builder, who prided himself on the number of pipes he had managed to squeeze into the side of the

chancel, and the tone of the instrument was indeed remarkable.

With all this Mr. Jobling had hoped to impress Lord Newpen, who was reputed to be a strict churchman and a musician as well; no wonder the Vicar's Warden was disappointed. The congregation noticed the listless way he took round the collecting bag. Even when he was reading the Lessons the Bible tone on which he prided himself lacked its usual aggressiveness.

When the Joblings were safely on their way to church Lord Newpen sallied forth from his bedroom and, after drifting about the house for awhile, settled down in the library to wait for his friend Dr. Oldbird, the eminent physician. Nor was he disappointed, for within a few minutes the doctor was ushered into the room by the smiling butler. Lord Newpen rose gravely, stretched out his hand and said, "Dr. Oldbird, this is indeed a most pleasant surprise." Then looking significantly at the butler, who immediately left the room, he added, "I am glad you were able to come so that we may have a little chat together while our mutual friends the Joblings are more suitably occupied elsewhere."

Dr. Oldbird looked shrewdly at his friend, and then remarked, "I imagine this is not the first time you have arranged, what you term, a pleasant surprise. I doubt if Mr. Jobling would be pleasantly surprised if he could see us seated together so comfortably. How did you manage to shake him off?"

"I simply didn't. He dropped off—to church."

"Exactly. You don't like him?"

"He bores me intensely, Oldbird. Are many of the wealthy manufacturers here like him?"

"Wealthy manufacturers—or, to be more correct, wealthy business men—vary just as much as

educationalists or doctors do, for that matter. Jobling belongs to the ostentatious, self-centred, money-getting type, but he is not a bad fellow in many ways. He is a man of little education and shows his worst side to strangers."

"And his best side, I suppose, to people who wish to build hospitals and churches."

"Yes, Newpen—and schools—and schools."

"So I am told; but why does he only give to schools in this neighbourhood?"

"Mainly, Newpen, I should imagine, because he likes recognition in his own neighbourhood. That is not unusual or unreasonable."

"That, Oldbird, I consider very narrow-minded."

"Other people beside Jobling are narrow-minded."

"My dear Oldbird, don't be disagreeable. I think you know we want to raise money for a new college at Oxbridge. Oxbridge is, as you know, the greatest centre of learning in the country; if Jobling could be induced to give, let us say a hundred thousand pounds, towards the new college, it would be possible to make him a lord."

"It would, most sapient Newpen."

"And that being so, most astute Oldbird, it may be that this desirable result could be brought about by the influence of a mutual friend such as yourself."

"It might, but I am afraid you must ask someone else to assist you. If you wished to endow a college in one of the great manufacturing towns in the north here I might assist you."

"Why do you object to Oxbridge, Oldbird?"

"I did not say that I objected to Oxbridge, but since you put it in that way I think I shall make my attitude clear when I say that I consider it little less than a tragedy that the centres of learning and govern-

ment are in the south, while the centres of industry lie mainly in the north; the result being that in one part of the country you have groups of intellectual and theoretical faddists who talk nonsense about industry and are out of touch with the vital forces of the nation, while in another part of the country you have the practical men, who control those forces, lacking theoretical knowledge and the perspective which a fuller knowledge of literature and history would bring."

"What you say, Oldbird, would be deplorable if your deductions were sound. Your manner of stating the case reminds me of the discussion society we belonged to in our youth, but with your knowledge of the manufacturing districts you must see that neither art nor literature can exist in such an atmosphere as this. Art and literature can only thrive where the rattle of machinery is unheard and the poisoned fumes from such chimneys as Jobling's great Tattleton chimney do not reach. Would you bring our best young minds here and train them amidst all this sordid rattle and grime?"

"Not altogether, but I would not have our best young minds educated by those who have no experience of rattle and grime. In our great industrial centres we need men of sound practical experience and wide vision; what is more, we must have them or the whole country will suffer. Ruskin calls some of our industrial towns 'hell holes,' but he at least has done something to enlighten the people who live in them; most men of literature and art pass by on the other side. That is why we get such men as Jobling in leading positions, and, vice versâ, we get narrow-minded, unpractical educationalists who have no experience of the actual life of the workers."

"Meaning me, of course."

"I wasn't thinking of you. I was thinking of the system of education and government in the country. A system which separates the purely intellectual world from the practical world must needs be wrong. But I hear Aurora in the hall, and if I mistake not she is coming this way, so we must defer our argument for the present. I thought so. . . . I am very glad to see you, my dear girl, hospital work seems to agree with you."

Dr. Oldbird had quite forgotten Newpen, who was sitting in a sleepy hollow with his back to the door, so that Aurora had entered without seeing him. After the doctor's greeting Lord Newpen rose slowly from his chair, stood up, tall, thin and punctilious, and said, in the high-pitched drawing voice peculiar to Oxbridge, "I shall be greatly indebted to you, Oldbird, if you will do me the honour of introducing me to your daughter. I understood that you were a bachelor."

"So I am, but I shall have much pleasure in introducing you to Miss Aurora Jobling. Lord Newpen—Miss Aurora Jobling."

Aurora turned round when she heard Lord Newpen speak, laughed at his mistake, then greeted him quite simply, saying, "Dr. Oldbird and I are great friends. It was he who persuaded me to qualify for the nursing profession and overcame my father's objections to my doing so. I owe a great deal to Dr. Oldbird, and look upon him as almost a second father."

Lord Newpen bowed and remarked as he did so, "Dr. Oldbird is indeed fortunate in having so devoted a pupil, shall we say. Your entrance into the room has happily put an end to an argument that we had entered into."

"Pray continue it, my lord. I should be very sorry if my presence interrupted you."

"No, no. That would never do. You have just come to us straight from church bearing a message of peace and goodwill. It is an extraordinary thing, but two men can never converse long without entering into an argument."

Aurora laughed. "I am afraid, my lord," she said, "that I must leave you in any case, for I have to get ready for dinner; the gong will ring in a few minutes."

When she had gone Lord Newpen turned to Dr. Oldbird and remarked, "Wonders will never cease. Who would dream of Jobling having such a daughter?"

"That," said Dr. Oldbird, "is where you make a mistake; you don't know Jobling. You have seen very little of him, and you have never had much to do with men of his type; you don't understand their possibilities. Only one side of his character is developed and that always obtrudes itself."

"I agree with you, Oldbird—in part—the vain-glorious, acquisitive and predatory side of his character obtrudes, but whether there is any other side that is capable of development remains to be seen."

"I also agree with you—in part—Newpen. We differ mainly about the undeveloped side of Jobling's character; but I have known him for many years, you have only met him once or twice. He has always interested me, partly because of that undeveloped side of his character. I believe it exists, and I think it will develop, but that depends on circumstances. If anything happened to him in business, involving him in heavy financial losses, or if anything happened to his wife or daughter, I believe the poise of his mind would be affected. He is an obstinate man, but not a strong one; a sudden crisis might affect him very greatly. Vanity is an uncertain breeze that drives men in different directions; misfortune is a strong

wind that few can resist; under its influence he might become a very different man. His eldest daughter, Aurora, is a remarkably fine woman handicapped by uncongenial home surroundings; she interests me greatly and compels my admiration."

"See 'Mental Analysis by that most illustrious physician Dr. Oldbird, M.D., F.R.C.S., &c., &c., pages 979 to 999.' In the meantime, Oldbird, I hear the sound of the gong; also, I am hungry, so let us seek the dining-room. My chief interest at the moment is in what our fare will be. Will it be Jobling hot or cold, Jobling roast or boiled, Jobling stewed or fried? Peradventure, it will be Jobling pickled or larded. Think of it, Oldbird; what do you say to Jobling larded? Before such a combination the stoutest digestive apparatus might reasonably quail, yet I fear that is what we shall be faced with. What sayest thou, Oldbird? Oldbird answereth not. Like Minerva's owl he remaineth silent. Then lead on Macbird, the New-pen follows thee. Lead on Old-bird, lead on!"

Mr. Jobling had not fully recovered his equanimity when he sat down at the head of his table. There was a fine round of roast beef in front of him, but even that did not wholly mitigate the gloom of his formal blessing. He was still conscious of the dull gnawing pain of disappointed vanity which attacks the nervous systems of the self-centred. Complexes had not been invented in those days, and even Dr. Oldbird would have hesitated before attempting to place his finger on the exact spot where the trouble lay; but he knew the symptoms, and felt confident in the efficacy of roast beef, nor was he mistaken.

The beef was tender, nay more, it was done to a turn and revealed a delicately pink interior when cut;

also the well of the dish overflowed with delicious, clear, ruddy-brown gravy. Altogether a dish for the Gods and the Goutless. What more could the nervous centre of a healthy Jobling need to restore its tone? Who indeed can resist the charms of a round of beef, when the carving knife first removes its forbidding exterior and reveals the allurements of its interior all coy and juicy pink, just relieved by a suspicion of golden adiposity? Certainly not a Jobling. Truly roast beef may prove a thousand times more soothing and restorative than any sermon, especially when accompanied by crisp unburnt Yorkshire pudding and roast potatoes.

So indeed it proved. Mr. Jobling expressed himself greatly relieved to find that Lord Newpen had recovered his appetite in spite of his nervous fatigue. He pressed him to take a second helping—"just a small piece of udder with it and a little gravy off the dish, with a piece of marrow toast.—A fine beast my lord, a fine beast; my butcher knows that only the best is good enough for me."

Mr. Jobling went on to express his disappointment and regret that his lordship had been unable to visit the church; he spoke of the excellent sermon which had been delivered by his friend, the Dean of Wiggleton, and referred to the fine playing of the organist, Dr. Blower. Of the latter he said, "His last voluntary, The War March by Mendelssohn—I expect you know it, my lord, being a musician—was simply wonderful. It quite shook the building." Then, turning to his wife he said, "Did it not move you, my dear?"

"It did," said Mrs. Jobling; "it was most unpleasant, it made the seat of the pew vibrate most uncomfortably. But the bassoon solo was most soothing."

Mr. Jobling hastened to correct his wife. "Clarionet not bassoon, my dear. Clarionet. I chose that stop. The clarionet is shut up in a box all by itself."

Mrs. Jobling's father, who did not appear to be listening, broke in unexpectedly, the effect being rendered more startling by a short snappy delivery like a policeman's rattle, astonishingly loud for so old a man. "Ha, ha!" he cackled. "Shut in a box. Must be a dusty box. Gave it a sore throat. Pity you can't shut Jobling up. Fine organ, indeed! Not it. Not it. Big Organ. Very noisy. 'Trumpet shall sound' kind of organ. Cost two thousand pounds. Money all wasted. Jobling's got no ear. Only pockets. Only pockets, and hasn't the sense to keep them buttoned up."

Mrs. Jobling laid her hand on her father's arm and said, "Oh, Grandpa, how can you say such things! You know it will hurt his feelings."

"Feelings! He's got no feelings. Only pockets and pride. That's all he's got. Only pockets and pride."

Lord Newpen thoroughly enjoyed the situation, but Dr. Oldbird turned the conversation, out of consideration for Aurora, by remarking, "I hope that the Dean of Wiggleton refrained from politics?"

Mr. Jobling replied at once, "Not altogether, but he didn't talk about financial questions, of which, between ourselves, my lord, the good dean is as ignorant as a child. Unfortunately he retails all the nonsense he picks up from anyone who gets him by the ear."

Grandpa exploded again. "Good, Jobling. Very good. Got him by the ear. Like a pig."

This quite scandalised Mr. Jobling, who hurried on to say, "Not at all. A most reverend dean. A most excellent sermon. He spoke at great length and with

great weight on education, especially on religious education in connection with the Board Schools. He did so, I imagine, because I informed him that Lord Newpen might possibly be one of his congregation. I think, my lord, you would have been greatly interested and impressed."

"I doubt it," said Lord Newpen. "I object to misrepresentation and mis-statement, and I regret to say that is what I expect from the Dean of Wiggleson on matters of education, judging from his frequent letters to the papers. I think the Cowper Temple Clause, which he falls foul of, is an excellent compromise; I consider simple Bible reading with intelligent explanation far preferable to learning creeds and catechism by heart. I think the Board Schools are excellent institutions, and I think the clergy should not put any unnecessary difficulties in the way of the State, seeing they represent the State church."

On hearing this Grandpa began chuckling, and when Lord Newpen had finished he broke out with, "Good, very good! Hear that, Jobling? He knows what he's talking about. Creeds, indeed! Addled eggs laid by Mother Church hundreds of years ago. Church should obey State. Very good! Very good! Dean's business to sit on addled eggs, but must see he don't give them to the children. He! he!"

Mr. Jobling felt that Grandpa must be suppressed, so he put on a magisterial air and said in a portentous manner, "The old should support authority; there is far too much freedom of thought now-a-days, especially among the younger generation who lack experience."

But Grandpa was not to be suppressed. There was something in Lord Newpen's manner that encouraged him, so he broke out again, "Umph! Don't mind

Jobling. Been to church. Good boy, Jobling. Swallowed the creeds whole. Can't stomach Cowper Temple clause. He! he! Jobling knows nothing about it. Better stick to stock exchange. Doesn't make an ass of himself on commercial matters. No, no!"

Here Aurora managed to head off Grandpa by giving him some grapes, and at the same time she poured out a glass of port for him. Mr. Jobling took advantage of the old man's silence to call attention to the port. He told Lord Newpen the year of its vintage, who bottled it, the name of the wine merchant he bought it from, when he bought it, the price he gave for it, how he kept one cellar for red wine and one for white, also the temperature he kept his cellars at.

He was entering on other details when he was again cut short by a most alarming "Umph" from Grandpa, followed by sharp choking coughs, caused by some of the port going down the wrong way and meeting the "Umph" coming up. This mishap settled Grandpa. Aurora slapped him on the back, her mother poured out a glass of water, and between them they reduced Grandpa's attack to a gentle gasping which continued until dessert was over.

In the afternoon while Grandpa was apparently sleeping off the combined effects of his midday meal and his conversational efforts, Lord Newpen casually introduced his scheme for a new college at Oxbridge, and mentioned some names of those who had promised to support the scheme.

"So far," he said, "we have issued no formal appeal, for it was thought that some of the merchant princes of the north might like to be associated with the undertaking. Indeed, it is possible that one, whom I am not yet at liberty to mention, may be induced to come forward with an extremely generous contri-

bution, possibly a hundred thousand pounds or more. If that matures, royalty might be invited to the opening and asked to confer a suitable honour on the donor; but, of course, that is all in the air at present."

Lord Newpen gave a sketch of the scheme and invited Mr. Jobling's opinion on it—as a business man. When Mr. Jobling did so Lord Newpen was surprised to find how clear-headed his criticisms were; he was also surprised and nettled at the caution his host displayed in avoiding any show of personal interest in the matter. Lord Newpen at last began to realise that even Mr. Jobling's vanity was not sufficient to induce him to spend a large sum of money on something that would not be of real service to his own neighbourhood. Mr. Jobling, indeed, went so far as to say he thought that merchant princes should spend their money in providing suitable education in the industrial districts from which they drew their wealth.

During the last part of the conversation Grandpa, who had already given sundry alarming snorts, sat up suddenly in his chair and summed up the matter by ejaculating, "Umph, Jobling, you are not such a fool as he thought you were. Quite right; keep your pockets buttoned when thieves are about. Line your own nest. East and West—Home's best. It'll be an old bird that puts salt on your tail."

Dr. Oldbird, who had been a silent listener, burst out laughing, then he got up hurriedly and said he must go as he had an engagement. Lord Newpen, who was extremely annoyed, followed Dr. Oldbird out of the room. As they parted at the door the doctor turned to his friend and said, "You should have tried to educate Grandpa first." All the answer he got was, "Damn Grandpa!"

The same afternoon Miss Priscilla Prickles called on her friend Aurora. She was considerably the older of the two, a woman of much assurance and somewhat acid enthusiasm, a great admirer of Lydia Becker and an ardent member of the women's party. She had enjoyed the rather unusual advantage of a liberal education, but had been cut off from exercising her undoubted ability to manage other people's affairs, for in those days women had few opportunities of engaging in occupations outside their own houses. Priscilla had never encountered the opposition and criticism which men meet every day in the usual course of their professions or businesses, without which experience it is difficult to acquire a sound judgment and a readiness to compromise.

Aurora did not agree with many of her friend's views, and Priscilla's intemperate self-assertion opened her eyes to the want of tact and sense displayed by many of the extreme members of the women's party and prevented her from joining it. Nowadays so many occupations are open to women that it is difficult to do justice to such people as Priscilla, but Aurora, who was hampered by the same conditions, regarded Priscilla with amusement and accepted her overbearing manner with equanimity.

In order to be safe from interruption she took her up to her own room. Their conversation soon turned on Lord Newpen, and Priscilla expressed her opinion of him with her usual vigour. "An entirely self-centred man, Aurora, you can take my word for it; no one could be more prejudiced or unfair on all questions affecting the education of women. I detest the man."

"If," replied Aurora, "those are your views, I don't suppose you will care to hear anything about him."

Priscilla immediately protested. "Of course, I am not so narrow-minded as to refuse to listen to anyone's views, if they are honest views," she said; "but Lord Newpen has that insufferable Oxbridge manner. I can't bear the sound of his high-pitched, drawling voice; he sneers at what he does not fully understand, and patronises what he is pleased to approve of. I know the man; he thinks women have inferior brains, and should be kept as drawing-room ornaments or domestic slaves; they should wear pretty dresses and play the piano, or darn stockings and knit antimacassars. He is a most insufferable intellectual coxcomb. His ideal woman is young, pretty and simpering. What did he talk to you about? Of course he admired you."

"Why of course? Am I pretty and simpering?"

"Don't be absurd, Aurora. What did he talk to you about?"

"He didn't talk much. My father did most of the talking, and my grandfather interrupted him as usual. It wasn't a very happy occasion."

"Why don't you assert yourself, Aurora? You can talk as well as anyone when you like. You are better educated than most women, and you read more than most men do. Women should put men in their places."

Aurora laughed and said, "That is just where I think you are mistaken. When women get argumentative they are seldom listened to. You forget that women are held to be weaker vessels; when women argue the men change the conversation out of regard for their weakness, and, for the matter of that, most women approve of their doing so."

"Really, Aurora, if I had known you would have been so tiresome and exasperating I wouldn't have

come to see you. I didn't come here to listen to copybook maxims. Who else was present at dinner?"

"The only other guest was Dr. Oldbird, whom you also know."

"How very extraordinary. No one else but Dr. Oldbird to meet Lord Newpen! How could your father be so remiss?"

"Lord Newpen said he was tired and needed rest. Dr. Oldbird came to see him and stayed to dinner."

"Making your house an hotel. That's an old trick of Lord Newpen's; I wouldn't have anything to do with such a man. I wonder what his object really is in coming here?"

"Shall we go downstairs and ask him? It would amuse Grandpa."

"Don't be silly, Aurora. What did they talk about?"

"Father talked about roast beef, port, the Dean and the organ. Grandfather was rude and Lord Newpen was amused."

Having said this Aurora got up, walked across to the window and looked out. The day was nearly spent, the sky was covered with a grey curtain of cloud in which was neither break or movement, faint ribbons of smoke rose slowly from tall chimneys and hung over Tattleton. The great Jobling chimney stood in front. The fires had been damped down for the day of rest. It was a dreary November afternoon, a dreary scene, a dreary day of rest. As Aurora looked out she felt that dreariness; there was something menacing in that monstrous chimney, something hostile to all natural life.

Priscilla, who had been watching Aurora intently, suddenly snapped out, "Aurora, what are you looking at?"

Aurora started and stood for a moment considering.

Then she crossed the room slowly, sat down by her friend and said rather wearily, "I was looking at the chimneys of Tattleton, especially at the tall one my father is so proud of. I'm tired of it all; there seems no end to it. My time's up at the hospital, and I can't leave home. Indeed, I'm not sure that I want to, yet there's nothing to do at home, nothing to do but listen to what doesn't interest me in the very least. I am fond of reading but I am not a bookworm; I want an active life, and that's just what I am barred out from. Can't you understand?"

"Of course, I can. I think it's extraordinary that you haven't understood before."

"I suppose I have more or less, but the fact that my time at the hospital has come to an end, the talk at the dinner table to-day, and that view out of the window, all brought it home to me."

"So you have found it out at last?"

"Found what out, Priscilla?"

"That for women there is no occupation but marriage."

Aurora looked at her friend for a moment, then laughed bitterly and said, "So that's what all your talk about Women's Rights comes to?"

"Possibly. But it won't always be so. Why don't you join us?"

"I don't know."

"Do you mean to say you are going to sit down tamely and accept what the men have given us? The choice of marriage—which generally means dependence on one particular man for life—or a life spent in copying pretty flowers and views into an album, playing pretty-pretty little tunes on the piano and wearing pretty dresses. Marriage and submission, or the pretty-pretty inane. Which will you choose? Remember, you

can't indulge in the pretty-pretty all your life." Having said this Priscilla looked shrewdly at her friend and laughed contemptuously.

Aurora faced her squarely and said, "Marriage need not mean dependence. I would never consent to such a marriage, nor will I accept your pretty-pretty inane as an alternative."

"Then," said Priscilla, "why not join Us?"

Aurora went to the window again and looked out before answering. With her eyes still fixed on Tattleton she spoke slowly, almost unwillingly, as if some hidden force was compelling her to speak.

"I don't know. I have been working at the hospital and there I have seen another side of life. The weary, worn and broken coming in, in the hope of being made whole. The strong, who have been injured or struck down by some disease that can't be properly treated at home, coming to be restored. The very best nurses are selfless women, women who give their lives to helping others. They are nearer heaven than I am, nearer than anyone else that I know. At present I am not content, and I don't see my way to content. I once heard Schubert's 'Wanderer' rendered by a great artist. The last words of that song come back to me now: 'There, where thou art not, all joy is there.' Not that I think joy is the ultimate aim of life, but I do think one should, if possible, be satisfied with one's aim in life. Since I went to the hospital I have realised that life is a much bigger thing than I thought it was; naturally I should like to make the best of it, but what that means for me I do not yet see. At present I am a wanderer."

After a pause she added, "The chimneys of Tattleton are at least real." Then she continued to look out of the window without speaking.

“Aurora! Come away from that window, the chimneys of Tattleton have mesmerised you.”

“Ah!” the girl answered, turning slowly round; “we may not like the chimneys, but we owe something to them. Don’t you see that, Priscilla?”

“Perhaps I do. Have you ever seen anyone you would care to marry, Aurora?”

“No, never.”

“If you don’t marry, what will you do? Have you ever thought of taking up some kind of charitable work?”

“No. I am simply waiting to see farther. At present I am a wanderer. I have seen enough of life at the hospital, I want to see more of life in general. Life isn’t an easy matter. Many of the wretched lives that I have seen there have been the result of mistakes, thoughtless acts, impulsive actions; and what is true of one class is true of all.”

CHAPTER VII

CHOOSING A HOUSEKEEPER

IT was washing day, and Mrs. Broadbeam had been on her feet since early morning; she was still active though nigh on sixteen stone, but she allowed that she was “noan so young as she used to be.” Her daughter Alice had come home early in the afternoon in order to help her. Alice was a sensible girl, well accustomed to humour her mother, but at last she protested. “Now, mother,” she said, “what’s the use of my coming home early to help you? Just you sit down while I lay the tea things.”

“Weel, Alice, theer’s summat in what yo say; but it’s noan so easy to set yoursel’ down when theer’s wark to be done. Howsomedevour, I will set me down and rest a bit, while yo set the tea.”

“Is anyone coming in for tea, mother?”

“Aye—feyther’s coming, an’ maybe Uncle John. Feyther won’t be here yet a bit, so yo needn’t set th’ kettle on. I’m noan so easy in my mind about Uncle John. Thee knows he didn’t get on with his first wife, and when he berrit her he made up his mind he’d not marry again. Then Susannah set her cap at him—most outrageous she did and fair scared him; so we set to wark and got him safe marrit to Epsie. An’ neaw Epsie be gone I doubt we mun look reawnt for some woman to tak’ care o’ him an’

kep house for him. As far as I can see theer's but two for it—thee or Ann Sharples."

"Me, mother! Why, you know I'm keeping company with Mat Haslam."

"Aye, aye, but theer's time enough for that, an' yo might do worse than tak' care o' yore Uncle John for a bit; it ud larn you to kep house before yo wur marrit to Mat. All the same, I'd sooner someone owder till you had Uncle John in hand, someone as 'ud keep busybodies from hankering all reawnt him. I'm feart as it'll be noan so easy gettin' Uncle John to tak Ann Sharples, but we mun try an' scheme it if we con. Si'thee, Alice, theer's thy grandfeyther, an' we haven't got kettle on th' fire. Weel, feyther, coom in an' set yo deawn. Yore fair threeping for breath."

"Threepin' be dommed. I bean't threepin'. What's Alice doin' in th' heawse? Is owt th' matter wi' thee? Art sick?"

"Nay, I be reet enuf. Alice got through hoo's wark at th' Hall early so as to help me finishing th' weshing."

"Weshin'! I reckon thou'rt always weshin'. Yo be gettin' 'eavy an' short of wint for that job. Alice'll coom in handy now yo be gettin' owd an' con't stir abeawt."

"I can stir about reet enough yet, feyther, but I be noan so young as I was. We be aw gettin' owd. An' yo mun be gradely owd seein' as yo be my feyther."

"Neaw, neaw, Sal. Theer's enough o' thot. What 'ast a mind to do abeawt John?"

"Weel, I've been tellin' Alice just afore yo coom, as John mun have someone to kep house for him."

"Aye, Sal, but who art thinkin' on?"

"Weel, I've tow'd Alice as it mun be either Ann Sharples or 'er. If we can scheme it I'd as lief

'ave Ann; hoo'd keep other fowk from werriting him."

"Ann Sharples! Why, Sal, hoo'd werrit 'im to de-ath. Hoo'd marry 'im 'ersel' as easy as a cat 'ud swallow a mouse."

"'Appen hoo could, if hoo set hoo's mind to it, but we mun scheme it so as hoo couldn't. Leastways Uncle John wouldn't have Ann nigh him unless hoo wur muzzled first."

"Muzzled!—What dost mean, Sal?"

"Mean! I mean what I ses. We mun muzzle her first or John'll not so much as look on 'er. Not he, an' quite right too. No, feyther, we mun get her to promise not to trap him into marrying her."

"Promise! What's the use o' getting a woman on the rampage to promise owt? I reckon Ann's too owd a bird to let you put salt o' thot kind on 'er tail."

"Hoo'll keep hoo's promise reet enuf, but it mun be th' reet sort o' a promise, it mun thot."

"What dost mean, Sal, by a reet kind o' a promise? I reckon one promise is no better than another."

"Nay, nay, feyther. Theer be promises as are made to be broken, but theer be some as yo munnat break. We mun make her promise with 'er hond on Th' Book as hoo'll 'ave nowt to do wi' John Skinner in marriage either in church or eawt o' it."

"Ow, Sal! Thot be a gradely promise, but I doubt it'll be noan so easy to get Ann to tak' it. Yo con lead an 'orse to th' watter but yo con't do een thot wi a womman, Ann'll not stond oop in church behint th' eagle wi her hond on Th' Book an' swear ony such like thing. Wi' aw th' fowk lookin' on at 'er! Not likely. Why, they'd coom an' stare at 'er theer as if it wur a gradely weddin'. An' John wudn't like

it, neither. Yo con arst Passon abeawt it if yo've a mind to, but I tell yo Ann'll 'ave nowt to do with it. Not 'er!"

"See Passon! Arst Ann to stond oop behind th' eagle an' swear i' th' church! What art moidering abeawt, feyther? In course hoo'd 'ave nowt to do with no such thing. See Passon abeawt it! Not likely. If hoo'll swear wi' her hond on 'Th' Book it's aw as we want. I reckon that's good enough, but we mun see Uncle John first before we do owt."

"Aye, Sal, we mun thot. Did I tell yo as I met Susannah this arternoon? Hoo sed hoo wur coomin' to see thee. I reckon it be abeawt John."

"Nay, feyther, Susannah'll not coom about John yet a bit. We sent her away wi' a flea in her ear on th' day o' th' funeral, an' Skewgill made a fool o' hissself an' aw. Nay, feyther, it'll be about her childer. Hoo likes to coom an' 'ave a chat with me about her childer at times. She does thot. Hoo's mighty taken up with her childer."

"'Er childer, Sal! Why, hoo's gotten but two, Dorcas an' th' babby, Shadrach. What does hoo want coomin' moidering yo abeawt um, I'd like to know?"

"Weel, feyther, si'thee, it be this road. Fust two childer, Zillah an' Haggai as coom twins, both died when they were but babbys, an' Susannah got skeart as hoo'd never rear a babby. Hoo sed it wur the Lord's doings, but hoo kneawd weel enough as hoo hadn't managed um reet, so hoo cooms now and again to see me if one o' th' childer's fingers does so much as ache. Weel I never—hoo's coomin' neaw—hoo is, for sure. Coom in, Susannah. Coom in an' set yo deawn an' 'ave a cup o' tay. Kettle's on th' boil, an' I'll 'ave the tay mashed in no time; an' if yo've owt to say abeawt childer, eawt wi' it an' never mind feyther

here, he's had more of um than he wanted, 'adn't yo, feyther?"

"Aye, Sal—more than enuf, more than enuf. I 'ad no peace wi' yo aw wratchin' rount th' house an' yore mother atop o' yo aw. I wur druv to th' pub to be eawt o' yore road. But for yo an' yore mother I mowt a been a taytotaller. Yore mother wur reel nasty at times, reel ratty, she wur thot. I'm noan complaining, Susannah, yo onderstand, but——"

"Neaw, feyther, just stop, we've 'ad enough o' thot."

"Aye, Sal, I 'ad enuf an' no mistake; it fair druv me to th' pub, as I wur tellin' Susannah. But for thot I doan doubt as I'd a been a taytotaller."

"Mr. Shivershins, I am greatly rejoiced to hear you say that you desire to be a teetotaller. It is never too late to take the pledge. Nothing would give our Young Teetotallers greater joy than to embrace both you and John Skinner at their next meeting. I will send a card to each of you with the date and time of the meeting on it, so that there may be no mistake."

"Tay-totallers be dommed! I never sed as I wanted to be one neaw. What 'ast coom abeawt, Susannah?"

"Thank you, Mr. Shivershins. Thank you for reminding me. I should have liked to gather you into our fold; nevertheless, some other time perhaps, when the work of grace is complete and the fruit of repentance is fully ripe, we may lead you into still waters. Then I will call upon you. Meantime, Mr. Shivershins, I thank you for reminding me of my errand. Sarah Broadbeam, is it true that your youngest child was troubled with the wind and had difficulty in digesting his bottle?"

Before Mrs. Broadbeam could answer her, Sim Shivershins burst into such a paroxysm of laughter

and coughing that she had to go to his assistance. She slapped him hard on the back, and kept saying again and again, "Doan do it, feyther. Doan yo go for to do it now. Doan do it! Yo'll bust yoursel'. Doan do it now! Doan do it!——" At last she managed to quieten him, and turned to Susannah and said, "I reckon tay went wrong road; he'll be better now. Theer, feyther, just yo set quiet an' say nowt. Neaw Susannah, what's the matter with yore child? Eawt with it an' never mind feyther."

"Thank you, Sarah Broadbeam. I trust Mr. Skinner is restored. Is he often afflicted with these sudden spasms?"

"Neaw, feyther. Doan do it. Doan do it. He'll be all reet soon, Susannah. He's subject to spasms at times. Summat mun a turnt in 'is stomach when tay went wrong road. Neaw, Susannah, just yo tell me aw abeawt Shadrach. Is he easy with his bottle?"

"No, Sarah Broadbeam. Shadrach is not easy with his bottle."

"Weel, Susannah, I 'ad my suspicions when I see yo wi' 'im last. He wur full o' wint to begin with, an' then yo gives 'im 'is bottle reet on top o' it, an' next moment yo go jiggity-jigging 'im oop an' deawn on yore knee. In corse he began to guggle; if I 'adn't taken 'im off yore knee he'd a give way aw o' a suddint, just like a soda bottle as is over'eated. Childer beant milk churns. What I ses to yo is, keep 'im quiet an' try 'arf milk an' 'arf watter. An' if 'ee's troubled wi' wint twixt 'is bottles, give 'im a teaspoon o' dill watter now an' agin."

"Thank you, Sarah Broadbeam. Thank you kindly. I shall certainly try the effect of water on Shadrach. I fear he has a very delicate stomach. And now I am afraid I must go back home and put Dorcas to

bed, my little handmaiden is so easily tired. Good evening, Sarah Broadbeam, you are truly a mother in Israel; I am indeed grateful to you. Good evening, Mr. Shivershins, I hope you will not be afflicted with any further spasms, and I trust that the work of grace which has begun within you will yield the ripened fruit of Teetotalism. I won't forget to send you a notice of our next meeting, together with a little pamphlet called 'How I became a teetotaller,' which I think may help you. Good evening, good evening."

"Weel, Sal, hoo's gone at last. Thot's what they call a 'Dispensaytiun'. I be fair sore reawnt my bally wi' keepin' off larfin' at 'er; I ain't got no use for 'still watters', not likely. Any child 'ud be troubled with wind as had a mother like 'er—they wud thot."

"Weel, feyther, yo may laugh at Susannah as much as yo've a mind to, but Susannah's a good woman though three parts a fool. Hoo never did know how to leave well alone, an' it's only nattu'al as hoo'd fuss wi' 'er childer. Aye, hoo's a reel woman. Theer's nowt like a babby for bringing the reel woman eawt o' us, I reckon. A babby's as much in need of its mother as we aw be of God Almighty, but it's only a reel woman as kneaws thot. It's a queer world, an' there be all sorts in it. Why, here's Uncle John arter aw. Coom in, Uncle John. Coom in an' set yo deawn. I be gradely fain to see yo, I be thot. I hope as yo'll be a bit more restit now. Yo've 'ad but a weary time o' late. I be glad to see thee abeawt again, I be thot."

"Thankee, Sal, an' I be reet glad to see thee and thankee for aw th' trouble yo've been to for me."

"Say nowt, Uncle John, I wur fain to do it."

"Weel, Sal, thou didst help me aw th' same, an' I doan kneaw what I should have done without thee. I'd a coom sooner neaw but I seed Susannah in front

o' me, so I bided my time till I saw 'er coom eawt. Did she say owt about me?"

"No, Uncle John, she came to see me about her babby, Shadrach."

"What's th' matter wi' Shadrach? He's not owd enough to start playing with fire or watter neither, for that matter."

"Theer's nowt the matter wi' him beyont a pash o' wint neaw an' agin. Neaw, feyther, let weel alone."

"Let weel alone. Why, John, Susannah wur nigh bein' the death o' me. Hoo sed as how Shadrach couldn't digest 'is bottle, just as if 'ee'd a swallowed it whole, glass an' aw. In corse I larfed, an' tay went wrong road; it did thot, I wur nigh choked. An' then theer wur a lot o' fule's talk o' spasms. I be gradely sore yet. But, John!"

"Aye, Sim?"

"What dost think? If Susannah bain't goin' to send yo and I a trac' 'How I became a tay-totaller', and a card from 'er Young Tay-totallers. Seems thot they'd fain embrace us at their next meetin'."

"What's Sim blethering abeawt, Sal?"

"Feyther's turning soft i' th' yed, Uncle John, that's what's the matter with him. He told Susannah that he'd 'ad too many childer and a ratty wife as druv 'im inter th' pub or else 'ee'd a been a tay-totaller. So Susannah takes him at his word an' ses as grace is warking in 'is inside, and I reckon he's not heard th' last o' it. Th' worst o' it he's started 'er off on yo as weel. It wur aw feyther's silly talk as did it."

"Weel, Sim, yo be a great dunderyed owd fool, thot's what yo be. Did Susannah say owt abeawt me to yo, Sal?"

"No, Uncle John. I reckon we give her summat else to think on last Saturday. Feyther wurn't th'

only one as got pepper. Skewgill wur vexed. But, Uncle John——”

“Weel, Sal?”

“I doan want to pester yo, but yo mun be thinkin’ o’ getting a housekeeper, an’ the sooner yo do it th’ better. Theer be some o’ th’ wimmin fowk wi’ their eyes fair jumping at yo.”

“Dom th’ wimmin fowk.”

“Aye, thot’s weel enough; but yo mun see as they doan dom yo. When a mon’s got a gradely lump o’ brass in his pocket, an’ is hanging like a ripe plum afore their eyes aw ready to drop off, yo con’t blame um if they give th’ tree a shake. What else ’ud yo expect?”

“Weel, weel. I wish they’d a’ put me in th’ churchyard beside Epsie an’ a’ dun wi’ me. I do thot. Th’ world’s but a weary place for me neaw. It be thot, Sal, it be thot.”

“Yo munna tak’ on beawt it, Uncle John. Yo mun mak’ th’ best o’ it. Aye. It be the only road. If Epsie wur here hoo’d say th’ same. Hoo wud, for sure.”

“’Appen hoo wud. ’Appen hoo wud. Hoo sed summat o’ th’ kind when hoo wur deein’, but I couldn’t stond it, I couldn’t stond it. So she gave oop abeawt it. She wur allus thinkin’ for me. Weel, Sal, say what thou hast a mind to say and a dun wi’ it.”

“Weel, Uncle John, what dost think o’ getting Ann Sharples to keep house for yo?”

“Nay, nay, Sal. Hoo’s too ready wi’ her tongue for me, an’ what would I do if she set her cap at me?”

“We’d see to that, Uncle John. We’d get her to put her hand on th’ Book an’ swear as she’d cherish yo, but hoo’d have nowt to do wi’ marryin’ yo.”

“What dost mean by cherishing me?”

"See that thou gettest thy meals regular an' tasty, mak' thy friends welcome when they coom to see thee, an' see as aw is comfortable reawnt thee without wasting thy brass. What else would I mean, Uncle John?"

"Weel, Sal, I'll think abeawt it."

"Doan think too long, Uncle John. Dost remember how nigh Susannah went to snappin' thee oop?"

"Weel, Sal. Yo con talk it over with Ann Sharples, but mind, I don't say as I'll agree to it. What will she want, dost think?"

"I can't say, Uncle John, but yo mun pay her weel, an' it'll be worth yore while to do it. 'Appen she might coom for a twelvemonth to see how it ud work."

"Aye, Sal, theer be raison in thot. Yo con put yore yeds together an' see what yo con mak eawt o' it."

"I'll do thot, Uncle John. I'll tak' my chance o' droppin' in on 'er unbeknown an' see what I con do for thee."

"Aw reet, Sal, see what yo con do. Neaw, Sim, it's gettin' late, we mun be goin'."

A day or two later Mrs. Broadbeam met Ann Sharples in the street and passed the time of day with her. Ann asked how her Uncle John was bearing his trouble, and that gave Mrs. Broadbeam an opening. She said she would like to have a chat with her about Uncle John, and they went into Ann's cottage for that purpose.

Sarah Broadbeam was not one to beat about the bush; she told Ann how anxious she was about her uncle. "Yo see, Ann, he's fair lost, an' he's gettin' owd, so we mun see as he's comfortable. Theer's my datter Alice; she might keep house for him, but I doubt she wouldn't be able to make him proper comfortable, not same as an owder woman might, one as

has kept house, thee kneaws. Theer's a lot o' wimmin as ull be ferriting reawnt 'im to see if they con marry him, so as to get holt of his brass. He's main feart o' thot. Neaw, if we could get someone as had kept house afore; a sensible managing woman as ud see as he's weel fed an' 'ad his friends comfortable reawnt abeawt 'im, a woman as ud promise to keep her honds off marrying him an' ud see as other wimmin didn't werrit him. If we could get such a woman it ud be worth his while to pay her weel for it. If yo and I heard o' such a woman we might talk to her abeawt it, an' 'appen she might try her hond at it for a time to see how it suited."

"Meaning me, of course, Sarah?"

"Weel, yo did just cross my mind. What dost think abeawt it?"

"It might suit me well enough, now my daughter is married. I should like to think it over before I said more."

After some further conversation Mrs. Broadbeam departed, well satisfied with the progress of her plans. On her way home she met Susannah, who greeted her gladly. "Sarah Broadbeam, the advice you gave me about Shadrach's bottle has been greatly blessed, it proved like a spring of water in a thirsty land. Truly, Sarah Broadbeam, you are indeed a mother in Israel."

"Weel, Susannah, yo tak' my advice, an' if Shadrach's reel bad just yo send for th' owd doctor. I reckon he'll do more for Shadrach than any of yore watter springs. I went nigh losing my youngest babby in a convolution, an' I should a done if Sam 'adn't started off straight an' brought doctor back wi' 'im."

CHAPTER VIII

DESIGNS

A MONTH had passed since Guy Hetheridge had paid his first visit to Goldmark Hall. During that time Mr. Jobling was away from home on important business, and Hetheridge had been employed in drawing up designs. He had made a complete set of water-colour drawings of his proposed cartoons, and had abandoned his first idea of working in fresco; instead he determined to work in oil on canvases which would be fixed on to the walls when complete. Now, on his second visit, he had brought all his drawings to show Mr. Jobling what he proposed to do.

When Mr. Jobling saw the drawings he was bewildered because they were on a much smaller scale than the finished canvases would be. Hetheridge expected that, and rattled away in order to prevent him from expressing a hasty opinion, for he knew Mr. Jobling considered himself an authority on art, and would adhere tenaciously to any opinion to which he had committed himself.

"You see," said Hetheridge, "it is difficult to realise what the final effect will be by merely looking at these small sketches, especially as they are executed in water-colour. The full-sized canvases will be in oil and, when fixed permanently on the walls, will be greatly enhanced by the decoration of the intervening spaces. But," and here he smiled, "with your knowledge of

art, coupled with a vivid imagination, you will be able to form some idea of what is intended. Let me explain the drawings before you criticise them. This is the design for the great central panel opposite the entrance. You will see that I have chosen the most important position in the room for the most important subject. Here you appear in person receiving the freedom of Wiggleton. After we have looked through the sketches I shall be glad if you will help me in regard to the details of that most notable occasion.

“To the left of the great central panel we have a smaller one representing Peace. A dove bearing a golden Olive Branch which Noah, who is looking out of a window in the ark, is waiting to receive. Your appearance here as Noah has reference to your interest in shipbuilding. If you think the likeness not sufficiently obvious, I can render it more so by altering the position of the tall hat so as to cast more light on your face.

“To the right of the great central panel, in order to balance Peace, we have one representing Plenty. The dove appears again, this time with a golden key in its beak. Instead of appearing as Noah, you are represented in your Mayoral Robes and chain standing in front of Goldmark Hall, waiting for the dove to bring you the key.

“That completes the main wall opposite the entrance. On the circular walls at each end of the room there will be large canvases: this sketch is for that at the end to the left as you enter; it shows Tattleton with its chimneys standing out against the sky at sunrise. This one portrays the Dawn of Mechanical Industry. Here you will be represented by your own chimney. The name of the firm can be inscribed on the chimney if you wish it. At the other end of the room you will

appear in the centre crowning the May Queen, with children dancing round you. On either side of the entrance there will be various figures representing the arts. I have not introduced you here, but I can do so if you wish.

"That completes the scheme so far as the panels are concerned; when these are ready to fix in their places the rest of the decoration can be completed. You will see that I have endeavoured to provide for the treatment of your room on the lines of the great Masters of the Renaissance, but I think you will agree that it would be unsuitable to introduce saints and angels into cartoons representing the Golden Age of Mechanical Industry." A curious smile escaped from the corners of the young artist's mouth as he said that.

Mr. Jobling expressed his approval of what Hetheridge had done and asked a few questions, but said he should like to keep the drawings for a day or two in order to consider them. Then he added, "I should very much like to show them to Alderman Dauber."

"Alderman Dauber! Why, he knows no more about art than——" Hetheridge nearly said, "than you do," but he pulled himself up in time and finished off with, "than a tom-cat does. If he's stroked the right way he'll purr; if not, he'll spit. If the room turns out a success he'll take all the credit and leave you none."

"Do you know him?" Mr. Jobling questioned.

"I've heard about him; and the very look of the man is enough."

Mr. Jobling was curious to know what Hetheridge meant, so he asked, "What is the matter with his looks?"

Again Hetheridge narrowly escaped giving an answer which would have annoyed Mr. Jobling, for Alderman

Dauber was considered very like Alderman Jobling. He hesitated a moment, then evaded the question by saying, "I don't know why, but I always picture an art specialist as a spacious man with a long curly beard; a man who is content to know, and is generally amused at the pretensions of those who don't."

Further conversation was prevented by the entry of the butler who came to tell Mr. Jobling that Mr. and Mrs. Skewgill had called to see him.

"Tell them to come another time, I'm busy."

"So I see, Sorr, and it's myself that told them that very thing. They said they would wait."

"Where did you put them?"

"I didn't put them anywhere, Sorr. They just sat down in the hall. I don't think wild horses would move them."

"What did they come for?"

"Yourself, Sorr. They want to see you."

"Ask Mrs. Jobling to see them."

"'Tis Mrs. Jobling that I offered them myself, Sorr. They said they didn't want to see Mrs. Jobling, they would just wait there till yourself could see them."

"I am afraid I must go and see them, Hetheridge. I will come back as soon as I can. They are very tiresome people. I expect they have come for a subscription."

When Mr. Jobling went into the hall two thin figures dressed in black rose to meet him. Before giving them a hearing he took them into his own room. They were hardly seated when Susannah began, "We have come to see you about one of your own workpeople, a member of our congregation who is very ill and quite unable to work. He has a wife and several young children who are dependent on him. I have written down his name and address

together with a few particulars, so that there can be no mistake."

She handed the paper to Mr. Jobling, and while he was reading it she continued in a stage whisper to her husband, "What a beautiful hall. Everything of the very best, regardless of expense. Such excellent taste. I wonder how much it cost him? I wish we had some of this money for our new school. You must ask him to help us when he has decided what to do for his own workman. I can see he is very much interested in the case, and we know he recognises his responsibilities. He is certain to help, he is so good and generous; you might allude to him in your next sermon as the good Samaritan. I am sure it will please him."

When Mr. Jobling finished reading the paper she had given him, he turned to her and said, "I see at the end of this you have made a very definite suggestion as to what I ought to do in the matter. I will think it over and let you know later."

"Thank you, Mr. Jobling. Thank you kindly. I said so, Skewgill. I said he would do what I thought he should do. How pleased the congregation will be when they hear it given out from the pulpit next Sunday."

"I shall do nothing of the kind, Mrs. Skewgill. If I was to do all you suggest in this case I should lay myself open to all kinds of unreasonable calls. Is there anything you wish to see me about, Mr. Skewgill?"

"I think you know, Mr. Jobling, that we must bring our schools up to date so as to meet the new Government requirements. If we are to obtain the Government Grant we must build new schools. Our chapel is the only one that has schools. I ask you to

help us because you are interested in education. I need hardly say that if we are unable to find the money for a new school, an expensive Board School will have to be provided out of the pockets of the ratepayers."

Mr. Jobling looked sharply at Skewgill, who eyed him quietly, knowing that he would count the cost very carefully and act accordingly. The two men had little in common except a natural aptitude for business. In Mr. Jobling that aptitude had been given full exercise and had become so automatic that he had even ceased to be proud of it. In Mr. Skewgill it was entirely subordinate to a fiery missionary spirit; a spirit that often rendered him unconscious of the ordinary world.

Between such men there could be no real sympathy, but only toleration born of respect for each other's energy and perseverance, a respect which mitigated the natural contempt each had for the other's attitude towards life. They were both keen men, but Mr. Jobling was determined to get a good percentage to put into his own banking account, while Mr. Skewgill was equally determined to lay something by "Where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal." Though each had an utter contempt for the other's point of view, yet each considered the other a useful member of the community.

Before they parted, Mr. Jobling, who was always on the look-out for young men of good parentage, asked Mr. Skewgill if he had any sons? Susannah hastened to reply, "Only one. Our chief joy and pride. So like his father. We hope that he may be blessed with the same gift of tongues so that we may dedicate him to the ministry."

"The reason I ask," said Mr. Jobling, "is that I am always glad to know of promising young men. He may not wish to be a minister. What is his name?"

"Shadrach."

Before writing the name down Mr. Jobling hesitated, and then said, "A curious name, how do you spell it?"

Mr. Skewgill enlightened him and hastened to explain that Shadrach was not yet a year old. Then, as there was nothing more to be gained on either side by prolonging the interview, they departed.

While Mr. Jobling was engaged with the Skewgills, Aurora went to the ballroom to look for him. She found Guy Hetheridge alone. She had not seen him before. This would have proved very embarrassing for the ordinary young woman of that day, but Aurora was by no means an ordinary young woman; she greeted him quite naturally. "I thought I should find my father here," she said. "You are Mr. Hetheridge, are you not?"

Guy was taken aback for a moment. He recalled Jim's words, 'Wait and see Aurora,' and he thought, Why, this is Aurora. She's simply splendid. I must paint her. But directly she ceased speaking he recovered himself and answered her readily. "Yes, I'm Guy Hetheridge right enough," he said. "I have been showing your father some water-colour drawings, suggestions of what I propose to do. Would you like to look at them?"

Aurora smiled as she answered, "I should like to see them, but I think my father will wish to show them himself. I am afraid you will be disappointed in us; as a family we know little about art."

"Does that matter so much?" asked Hetheridge.

"Don't ask father that question." As she said this they both laughed. Aurora was surprised to find

herself laughing so readily with this stranger, but he replied at once, "I don't intend to. I ask—you—does knowing about art really matter much?"

"I have been always led to suppose it does."

"Who by?"

"All kinds of people."

"By all kinds of people I suppose you mean by your Godfather, Godmother, Mrs. Grundy and all the crew of Popular Lecturers." He stopped suddenly and they both laughed. Then she said, "I am afraid you don't take your art very seriously."

"Oh yes, I do. I love art. That's why I can't stand the rot that's talked about it. Of course, if you only want to talk about it, I advise you to read Mrs. Gushing's Guide to the Picturesque, see the Academy and read what the daily papers say about the pictures. But if you really care for what is beautiful, you will soon learn by comparing what is good with what is not. Of course, if you are really going to study art, that is quite another matter; to be an artist you must give up everything for it. Art is a very strict mistress."

As Hetheridge said this Aurora felt as if a cold wind had come into the room, and she hesitated before saying, "One must be very sure of oneself and of one's aim in life before giving up everything for a single pursuit."

"Yes," he replied, "there are no short cuts to anything that is lasting. True art, like everything that is worth having, demands sacrifice, but no sacrifice is complete without love. I love my art."

Something antagonistic stirred in Aurora and prompted her to ask him, "What if you fail?"

"Fail! Of course I shall fail," he replied. "Even great artists fall far short of their ideals. How can it be otherwise? All good work's like that, and life

without work wouldn't be worth living." Then he laughed gaily and said, "It's all your fault, you led me on to talk about art. You must think me an idiot."

"Far from it," she protested; "I quite understand. Only, we can't all be so sure of our object as you are. Many of us haven't even got the opportunity of choosing. Especially those who happen to be women. And the men! Many who succeed in business think of nothing but money-making or display. What do you think of the chimneys of Tattleton?" She almost fixed the question at him.

His answer was equally direct. "I loathe them." A shadow seemed to step between them as he said it.

"That," she replied, "is all very well for you with your love of art, you have no ties with manufacture; but what about the rest of us here if art passes us by on the other side?"

It was Hetheridge's turn to feel the chill wind from the fields of mechanical industry as she concluded by saying: "Art of every kind is needed here more than anywhere else. Here, even Nature withdraws herself from us."

Hetheridge made no immediate reply, but he looked at her, and longed still more to paint her. What a magnificent Madonna she would make. No weak woman, but a Goddess holding a God in her arms. Then he thought of Jobling and asked rather bitterly, "How can art live in such a neighbourhood as this?"

Aurora drew herself up and answered him coldly. "So you feel like that? But I hear my father coming; no doubt you have further arrangements to make with him." So saying, she left him.

When Mr. Jobling returned to the ballroom he looked through the drawings again and asked a few

more questions. Then Guy remembered his desire to paint Aurora, and as a first step he asked Mr. Jobling if it would be possible for him to work at Goldmark Hall; he pointed out that the light in the ballroom was perfect and it would both save time and be helpful in many ways if he could work there. Mr. Jobling saw the reasonableness of the request, and it was arranged that Hetheridge should do so when the room was not needed for any other purpose.

In thinking over her interview with Hetheridge, Aurora was rather annoyed with herself for taking him so seriously. She was a thoroughly healthy young woman, and had a wholesome objection to people who took offence easily or were nervous and fanciful. She was healthy both in mind and body. She was very practical. She could lay a fire well—which is more than most people can. She was neat and tidy and never thought of throwing waste paper on the drawing-room fire—as some people do—though it is possible if one of the present-day novels on the sex complex had been put into her hands she might have thrown that in the fire.

Still, she had seen more of life than most women of her age and had naturally thought of marriage; but so far she had been content to be a Wanderer, as she had told her friend Priscilla Prickles. Nevertheless, her interview with Hetheridge and his remark that art could not live in such a neighbourhood disturbed her. She looked out on the chimneys of Tattleton, and as she did so she felt strangely discouraged. Then she remembered that she had some letters¹ to send, and sat down and wrote them.

Guy was by nature a merry fellow, one who took life as it came and was ready to enjoy all there was to enjoy; he never worried about the dark side of

life. His tread was so light that strangers never suspected the intense love of art that held him ever in its grip. When he talked about his visit to Goldmark Hall with Jim in the evening his customary lightheartedness reasserted itself, and it was only towards the end of their conversation that he spoke in rather a different vein.

Jim had asked him what he thought of Aurora, and Guy hesitated before answering; when he did answer, he said that he longed to paint her "as a Madonna. Not as a mild sweet woman, but as a strong Goddess with a God in her arms."

Jim chuckled. "I told you to wait and see Aurora," he said.

"I know you did," Guy replied; "but you never told me to expect such a woman as that. I must get her to sit for me somehow."

"Get her to marry you; then you can paint her as much as you like. That's the usual thing for an artist to do. Isn't it?"

"You are a brute, Jim, and I was a fool to talk about her to you. I might have known you wouldn't understand."

"Sorry, old fellow," said Jim; "you must be rather keen on her, or you would have known I was only joking."

"I know you were, but I can't stand that kind of joke. It seems a kind of sacrilege even to think of her as Jobling's daughter. How could he have such a splendid daughter? It seems a horrible jest."

"I thought you rather liked Jobling, and were greatly interested in the possibility of his issuing from his golden cocoon as a gorgeous butterfly?"

Guy's only answer was to throw a cushion at him.

CHAPTER IX

BUSINESS CHAT

HERBERT TEMPLE and his wife were spending the evening at the old Hall. He was the leading spirit at the neighbouring colliery, and the Professor was always glad to see him. When the Professor first made his acquaintance he admired his indomitable pluck but he disliked his intense keenness. Many years had passed since then; Temple still retained his untiring energy, but time and experience had widened his views and ripened his judgment, though he still retained a certain intolerance.

When dinner was over the Professor took him to his library and left the ladies to talk of household affairs and other such matters, for Temple cared nothing about music and the Professor liked hearing about the collieries. Temple began by describing a new air drill that they were trying, and a discussion on coal-getting and mechanical power followed. An inquiry from the Professor as to the amount of coal in the neighbourhood led Temple on to speak of the uncertainty of coal mining, and the impossibility of forming any reliable estimate of the coal in the country.

“But,” said the Professor, “there are the Geological maps of the Government. You can buy these, and from them you can make calculations.”

Temple laughed before answering. “Those maps are precious little use. The Ordinance Depart-

ment certainly collect all the data they can, but where the mines are virgin there is no reliable information."

"I do not understand," the Professor objected. "You do not mean to tell me those maps are just one story of the cock and the bull?"

"No, but it often turns out that the coal which they assume to be continuous doesn't even exist. Take our Six-Foot mine: on the west it is only a couple of feet thick and rotten dirty coal at that, on the east there's seven feet of fine coal. Nature doesn't lay coal down like a carpet. In our Four-Foot mine we have come up against a big fault not shown on the Government maps."

"But I did read in the *Wiggleton Observer* one very long account and an article on these things by a geologist that is known and very well spoken about. He did give many figures and did show how there was coal in this country for many hundred years."

"There may be," said Temple, "but a lot of it won't be worth getting, and a lot will be too costly to work. On the other hand, there may be coalfields not yet discovered."

"That is very curious. The scientific man does give figures which the *Observer* does publish, yet you say they can know nothing about it?"

"No more does anyone, except perhaps the expert witness who knows everything."

"The expert witness. Bah! He makes nothings."

"Excuse me," objected Temple, "he makes a good deal. He makes a great impression on certain bell-mouthed politicians and faddy newspapers, and they again impress the general public who are ready to believe anything if it is said loud and often and put in print."

"You are not fair to the newspapers, my friend," said the Professor. "I think you do take in the *Observer*; it is a good paper, is it not?"

"Yes, in many ways one of the best," Temple answered; "but some of their articles on trade and commerce are biassed by their political views, and they have some young jockeys on their staff who know how to dip their pens in the inkpot, and that's about all."

"But, my friend, do you pay any attention to those articles? We all do know it is one thing to talk about trade and economics at the university; it is another thing to know somethings about them. Besides, these young men must learn to use the pen sometime; it does not matter what they do write."

"I don't agree with you," said Temple. "I think it does matter; the editor should keep them in order."

"My friend, the editor is a man, he is also faddy; most of us are. Now, there is this matter of free trade."

"Oh, the paper's all right there, only it goes too far and lays itself open. It does not do to overstate a case. It does more harm than good."

"Ach soh, that is like the child's copy-book. Also, you do say the paper is all right because it does agree with you about one thing, but it is all wrong when it does not agree with you. Therefore, I do suppose you are always right. No, no. It is well to see the both sides. Now, in this matter of Free Trade. I do believe in it at present—for England, yes—but one American he did say to me, that is all very well for England because she does possess the markets of the world, but in America we do get tired of being only the agricultural nation, we wish also to be an industrial one; so we shall protect our manufactures

until they do get on their legs, then you will see somethings."

"We haven't come to that yet, Professor."

"That is so. Not yet—but it will come some day, perhaps sooner than you think. In Germany, for instance, is much coal and iron, far more than in this little island. I did not like the Prussian war. The Germans have become aggressive; some day they may take much of your trade, in the end it might become one great struggle for the world's trade; perhaps it will be between America and Germany."

"You are looking far ahead, Professor."

"That is so, but you will make yourself blind if you will not see that other countries are bigger than yours, that they have more coal and iron and other things, and some day they will be able to do some things you cannot do."

"You are not cheering to-night."

"Perhaps not, but I do think much about this great expansion of the mechanical industry; it cannot go on growing always; some day there will be a great struggle. What if the fittest does not survive, and all does end in war and destruction?"

"I thought you expected education to do much towards bringing war to an end, and that science would make war so destructive that no nation in its senses would venture to wage it? The battle of Sedan was a terrible affair."

"I did say somethings, but I did not go so far as that; also I did say that education without anythings of religion or moral training would be a very dangerous thing. It might put the dagger into the hand of the criminal. No, my friend, education must be of the right sort if it is to be of any real use. You did not go to the meeting at the Town Hall of Tattleton?"

"No, I couldn't manage it; we had some friends with us for the week-end. I read the account in the *Observer*. Lord Newpen addressed the meeting, and you were there."

"That is so. He did speak well, but he does not really understand the needs of the workers. I do mean the needs of what you call the workpeople and the business men; and the Joblings who was in the chair did only pour out the oil and spread the butter on him. And the Joblings had not enough sense to see that the Newpen did not like it."

"Did you say anything?"

"No. I did say nothings. If I had they would have said, Ach, there is that tiresome old German Professor again; what does he know about this country? It is curious they do think so much of their Joblings."

"I don't know that they do, but they think a good deal of his money."

"Nevertheless, he must be one good business man. The Squire and others here do not like him, but that makes nothings. The Squire belongs to the old school and the Joblings belongs to the new, so they do tell me."

"He doesn't belong to any school," said Temple. "He knows one business fairly well—the cotton business. But I doubt if he would have done much good in that if he hadn't been lucky in the people who really run his mill for him."

"Ach soh, but the most important thing in the big business is to pick out the best men to manage it."

"That's right enough, but you can only do that for a business you understand. I went to a meeting the other day and Jobling was in the chair. He talked a lot of bosh; if the secretary hadn't been a smart

fellow we should have got nothing done. There are lots of men like that, they think they know everything because they understand one business."

"I do quite agree, my friend, that one business is enough for one man; that I have always said. It is many years since I did say that to you about my son when you did try to get us to join you at the colliery. I remember then you did wish to extend your affairs, and did want the money, so you did bring your plans here and you would have done almost anythings to get me to join you; but I did tell you that my son had learnt the chemical business, and that was enough. Now, I do think the affairs do get so big that even the one business is too much for the one man. Perhaps some time the business may all be done by the Limited Companies and the Co-operative Societies, but I fear that would be bad for the individual people. Do you not think so?"

"Yes. I think that will be one of the great difficulties of the future; for a time the big concerns will prove economical, later on the practical drawbacks will appear. Co-operation may be good for distribution, but not for all production. I do not believe in very big concerns. There are two stock arguments, one for, and one against them. Make the business as big as you can so as to cut down standing and other general expenses and do away with wasteful competition. Don't make the business so big that the heads of it lose practical touch. The first is obvious, the second can only be appreciated by those who are familiar with the actual working of the business. But, I think there is another and far more important consideration which is generally lost sight of. The men who run their own businesses are not only keener, more interested and dependent on their business, they are also

more ready to devise and adopt new methods. If you do away with such men the trade of the country will ultimately lack initiative."

"That is so," said the Professor, "that is most important. It is at the bottom of all this which I do fear about the great Mechanical Expansion of Industry. I have always said it will destroy the individual, and in the end it will destroy the self-reliance of the people. No amount of educating all the people alike will save it. You cannot educate all the people alike. I do notice the old people here; though they have little education they are much more self-reliant and original than the younger generation; the best of them do think out the things for themselves. But, of course, these young peoples would call me an Old Fogey. Talking of this younger generation, I do suppose you have seen this Guy Hetheridge who has come to paint the Joblings?"

"Yes, he seems a bright young fellow, though one of the last I should have expected Jim to foregather with. There's little of the artist about Jim."

"No. That is so. Nevertheless, it is good to make friends with someone that is not like yourself. I do not know much about the paintings, but I love the music, and I do like this young man who is so devoted to his art. I do hope he will not be disappointed in his life."

"Why should he be more disappointed than others?" asked Herbert.

"Because the art does make more demands on the individual than does anythings else. The profession of the artist does become a part of his life; you cannot separate him from his art. Also, the artist has not the skin so thick as the business man; he does need more sympathy, and that does make his life difficult."

"I shouldn't call Hetheridge thin-skinned, he's got too great a sense of humour for that."

"Ach soh. This Humour! What is it? It is somethings which does come and go like the breeze upon the waters, but down below does lie the great reality of Love. Humour cannot stop the great tragedies of life. No, my friend, Humour, he is good, but Love is the great thing."

"I always understood that Love was at the bottom of most of the tragedies of life," said Herbert.

"That is so; but if you do seek what is the best there is always the great danger of failure. The failure is in himself the tragedy. Nevertheless, it was worth the while. So it is in art. In the business is different things."

"There's not much love lost in business; even Justice is difficult enough to follow," Herbert remarked.

"We all love somethings, even if it is only ourselves," the Professor replied. "Justice should be the first principle for the business man in dealing with other peoples; but the art does consist of the love of the beautiful. To give the life to art is very different to giving it to business. The man at the head of the big business has many people under him. But with the art it is quite otherwise. The artist is alone; he alone sees the beauty, he alone tries to seize it; it is his life, if he fails he does lose almost everythings. I often do say to myself how glorious to be a Beethoven, but then I do think if I had the genius of Beethoven and then did become deaf as he did—Ach! It is the lion alone in the cage thinking of the wide spaces of the earth. I do not like to remember that. No, my friend, the business and the art are two different things. Do you not see that?"

"I don't know much about art," Herbert replied, "but I agree with you about Justice in the management of business. It's unfair to show undue consideration for a single individual. In public affairs I have often seen men on committees indulging in sympathy for an individual, regardless of the injustice they are doing to others. Sloppy-minded people of that kind should confine their energies to private charity. They are not fit for public or private business management. I have no patience with that kind of thing. It's self-indulgence, neither more nor less."

"That is so," the Professor agreed, "nevertheless, though I would put the Justice first, I would also add the Sympathy; there are some people who always do pick out the faults and never do praise. I should not willingly serve those people."

"I think as you do about praise and blame," said Herbert; "but as to sympathy, I enjoy working with a man who is keen about his work, but I have no use for a duffer. I simply can't stand a well-meaning duffer. I don't think you have any idea how irritating it is to be held back by a slow-witted man when you feel a matter should be dealt with promptly. I don't mind a man who makes a few mistakes; we all do that; but the man who is always balancing possibilities is impossible. I would shut up such men in a fools' paradise."

"Ha, ha!" laughed the Professor, "there does speak the true business man. I do not think I should make one good business man, except perhaps in the collieries. The coal-mining does interest me much; I do like the colliers, and I should also like the dealings with the forces of Nature and all the changes and uncertainties they do bring. The coal business is

not so what you call cut and dry as the other things.—Is James Thornton going to join you in the Colliery?" he continued. "The Squire he does find it difficult to arrange his mind about that. They do tell me Jim is very clever with the machines. Is it not so?"

"Yes, Jim's uncommonly good at anything connected with machinery; it would be a mistake for him to leave the Engineering Works. We could always get his help if we wanted to, but we buy all our engines and boilers and get special advice when necessary; all we do is to look after the ordinary repairs. Of course, we draw up the plans for our main operations, but that we can manage best ourselves. Old Strong i' th' Arm doesn't approve of our having appointed a man over the machinery department, as it is. He said to me the other day, 'I doan think much o' thot mon or yours as yo've put a' top o' machinery. He sits in th' office aw day, castin' oop figures an' makkin' plans as no mon in 'is senses con understand. I reckon he'd do a sight better if he'd coom reawnt an' see as fowk be doing their wark reet and not playing theyselves.' There's some truth in what he says.

"No," went on Temple, "Jim should stick to his engineering. But there's another thing that is worryng the Squire. We want to get the coal under Tattle Park. We should, of course, leave coal to support the Hall, but he's got it into his head that it's the beginning of the end. He thinks if more coal is got there will be more chimneys. He feels the old order is passing away. He doesn't like the new. He hates the chimneys of Tattleton. The smell of the alkali fumes from Jobling's chimney has got on his nerves. Haven't you noticed it?"

"That is so," the Professor assented, "I have noticed that. I do not wonder. The poison fumes of the great chemical chimney does kill his trees, and they also do get up his nose. He is a strong man, but he does get old; also, he dose think he may be driven away from the Hall by these stinks. I am very sorry for the Squire."

"So am I, Professor, but getting the coal from under the park would make little difference. His objections are purely imaginary."

"Perhaps that is so. But I do hear the ladies. I think they do come this way. Soh, you have come to take your husband away from me? We have had much talks together."

CHAPTER X

PORTRAITS

AURORA was expecting her friend Priscilla Prickles. While waiting for her she occupied herself with some sewing, at the same time she was considering a list of visits which she had been unable to pay when working at the hospital. She disliked leaving obligations unfulfilled, letters unanswered and bills unpaid. She objected to waste of every kind, and was determined, if possible, neither to waste her time nor her life. Aurora inherited some of her father's aptitude for business, and she had absorbed some of the atmosphere that surrounded her, but she was also possessed by a curious critical spirit which might have embittered her if her friend Dr. Oldbird had not intervened and arranged for her to work at the hospital in Wiggleton. Now that work was over she missed the regular occupation and felt the constraint of her home surroundings.

When Priscilla arrived she greeted Aurora briskly. "I'm sorry I'm late. I couldn't help it. I hope I haven't wasted your time?"

"Not at all. Since my hospital work came to an end my chief occupation has been that of wasting time."

"All the same, I am very glad your hospital work has come to an end."

"Why, Priscilla?"

"Because I don't think it suited you."

"Dr. Oldbird was quite satisfied with my work there."

"I'm not questioning your work. I know nothing about it. I have no doubt you would do it methodically and thoroughly. It isn't that, Aurora. It's the effect of the work on yourself that I question, especially when I think of the books you have been reading while working there."

"It was you that suggested my reading Ruskin and Carlyle."

"I did, but I didn't approve of your reading either Herbert Spencer or Strauss. Strauss, I think, was especially bad for you, when you were so obsessed with the darker side of life at the hospital. You seem to me to have lost faith in life."

"I don't think I have. I have left my old anchorage, that is all. As I told you the other day, I am a wanderer."

"Then, wander by all means, but not in the spirit of Schubert's 'Wanderer' that you were speaking about. The last phrase which you quoted, 'There, where thou art not, all joy is there,' is nothing more nor less than Discontent. No, Aurora, if you wander, wander in the spirit of Schubert's 'Wandering' which I think is one of the happiest songs in existence. Seriously, I do think you ought to leave home for a while. You need a change of scene. Get fresh ideas by seeing other people in different surroundings. You may shake your head as much as you like, but I know what I am talking about. You may think me unreasonable and extreme in my views, perhaps I am; but I have seen so many lives cramped by so-called home duties. A home bird is apt to look on its cage as the world or the world as a cage."

"You needn't trouble about me, Priscilla. When Christmas and New Year are over I intend to set off on a round of visits."

"Really, Aurora, do you mean to say you are going to be content with a round of visits, visits to your own relations, for I suppose that's what it comes to? That will be no change for you. It will be merely going from one Goldmark Hall to another. You ought to get right away. Duty visits are dreary visitations. No, Aurora, you should learn to take life lightly as Hetheridge does. He reminds me of a newly-born butterfly fanning itself in the sun."

"Capital, Priscilla. You should write a poem on the butterfly and dedicate it to him. We must ask him to paint a picture of Youthful Joy as a butterfly alighting on the flower of life with the sunshine of hope gilding its wings."

"Yes, Aurora—regardless of the cloud of fate rising in the distance; a cloud that holds rain, and hail, and lightning. Think of that, Aurora—and lightning."

"Tragedy! Think of that Priscilla! But why bring in a great thundercloud to destroy the poor butterfly? Besides, Hetheridge is not a mere butterfly; underneath all his lightness of heart there lies an intense devotion to art. When I introduced him to you didn't you notice how enthusiastic he was about the Renaissance?"

"I noticed a good many things, Aurora. I heard him say he wished to paint you; that's what made me think of the thundercloud. Mind you are not both caught out in the rain. A shower that lasted 'until death you do part' might prove rather damping."

Aurora protested. "Nonsense, Priscilla. There's no danger of that. I have nothing in common with the artist nature. To me Hetheridge is just a

charming boy. Sometimes he makes me feel old—Oh so old!”

“Are you blind?—Don’t you see that he admires you? Not for what you are, I admit, but for what he sees—your beauty. You appeal strongly to his love of the beautiful; remember that, Aurora, and mind what you are about. He’s not so cold-blooded as you are.”

“Cold-blooded! Priscilla!”

“Yes, cold-blooded. Don’t look at me like a poisonous note of interrogation. You know perfectly well what I mean. You are not demonstrative, you never have been; and lately you have been more aloof than ever, although you meet everyone so easily.”

“You imagine things, Priscilla.”

“I notice some things you don’t. Artists see and admire what is beautiful. At least, good artists do. Poor artists look on the surface and often see nothing there but the reflection of themselves. They call that self-expression; there’s not much harm in that except to their work. But when a good artist gets enamoured with the surface and——”

“And what, Priscilla?”

“Have you ever seen young thrushes dash against a window-pane?”

“Yes, poor things, when they are after a daddy-long-legs.”

“Aurora, you are incorrigible. Is young Hetheridge going to paint a portrait of you?”

“Something of the kind. He’s nearly finished painting one of my father receiving the freedom of Wiggleton. He’s doing it for a big panel painting for the side of the ballroom; rather a mad idea, but father wishes it. I’ve promised to let him paint me; I think he means to begin to-morrow. It will be

rather amusing. He suggested painting me as a Madonna."

"Most amusing, Aurora, and all quite proper. No doubt he will want to exhibit you at the Royal Academy. Portrait of Miss Aurora Jobling as the Madonna of Tattleton by that talented young artist, Guy Hetheridge; a most sympathetic rendering of a most charming subject with Renaissance chimneys in the background. Very amusing. I think you are all mad together."

"It's what they used to do in the Renaissance, Priscilla."

"We don't live in those days. It is our privilege to live in the Great Industrial Age. Do you remember talking to me about the chimneys of Tattleton? You seem to have forgotten them. No, Aurora, you must put your foot down on the Madonna. Let him paint you as a saint, if you like, though that's absurd enough. Santa Aurora del Palazzo d'Oro, companion picture to the portrait of her father, The Mayor of Wiggleton. Sounds incongruous, doesn't it? I must say it's most refreshing to come in contact with such ingenuous simplicity in this mechanical age. I wonder what Hetheridge has made of your father?"

"Shall we go to the ballroom now and see? He must have nearly finished. I don't think my father's with him now."

"Very well, if you think he won't mind. I should like to look in with you for a moment, then I must go."

Guy Hetheridge had almost completed his study of Mr. Jobling; he had been filling in some details, and was strengthening the background when the two ladies entered the ballroom. As they came in he left the easel and stepped forward to meet them.

There was something almost uncanny in the way Mr. Jobling's figure stood out of the canvas at the end of the room, all by itself. It was a full-sized portrait, almost brutally painted; the face looked pink and aggressive with its fiery little eyes, and the strong pudgy hands grasped the casket which contained the freedom of Wiggleton. Both ladies stood looking at it silently. At last Priscilla remarked, "I think it is very like your father." Turning to the artist, she said, "I congratulate you on your success, Mr. Hetheridge. I think you have produced a remarkably characteristic portrait of Mr. Jobling. I hope you will be equally successful in your presentation of Miss Jobling."

"I am greatly flattered by your approval, Miss Prickles," Hetheridge replied. "I also hope I may be equally fortunate with Miss Jobling."

Then he took a great canvas which was leaning against the wall and turned it round towards them so that they might see it, saying to Priscilla as he did so, "Perhaps it will interest you to see the full-size drawing for the main panel representing the presentation of the freedom of Wiggleton to Mr. Jobling. I should like to know what you think of it."

A mischievous smile lit up his face as he said that, but it passed unnoticed by Priscilla, who was curious to see the drawing. She stood for some time examining it closely, then she remarked, "I am afraid I am but a poor judge of artistic work. Like most amateurs, I am swayed by my liking for the subject, and I must confess I should not have chosen this one for the decoration of a room in an English home."

"That is frank, at any rate," he replied. "I hope you won't succeed in prejudicing Miss Jobling against it. I think when it is finished it will fall naturally into its place, and it seems to me only fitting that the

subject of the principal wall-painting in this room should be some memorable event in the life of the master of the house, and, as the ballroom is the most public room in the house, that it should be of a public nature."

"If you had not asked my opinion, Mr. Hetheridge, I should not have ventured to give it. I must now say good afternoon. I congratulate you on being equally as ready with your tongue as with your brush."

After seeing her friend off, Aurora returned to the ballroom, and Hetheridge remarked, "Miss Prickles' views are uncompromising. Is she always like that or was she just out to quiz me?"

Aurora laughed and replied, "Perhaps she wanted to see if you were thin-skinned."

"Do you think I am?" asked Guy.

"I don't quite know whether you are or not. Artists' skins seem to me different from those of ordinary people. I suppose they are adapted to the world they live in."

"Don't we all live in the same world?"

"Certainly not," she replied. "You live in a different world to mine. You have no room in your world for the chimneys of Tattleton."

"Damn the chimneys of Tattleton. I beg your pardon. I couldn't help saying it. I detest those chimneys, but I don't see why they should trouble you."

She hesitated a moment, then she said, "I was born amidst these surroundings, and until lately I never questioned them. I can quite understand that you, with your love of the beautiful, must detest them; for me it is otherwise, those chimneys form part of my life, they seem to hold some message for me. During the last three years I have been in close touch

with the seething humanity of this industrial centre; you have not. The very sound of the city is full of intense, vibrating life—life which is almost inarticulate and yet so overpowering. Watching it is like watching a new world being formed; a new world without form, but by no means void. I should like to take my part in this new world, but I don't see how to do it. I feel outside it, yet bound to it."

"Don't you think," he said, "that it is best to let this new world of Industry work out its own salvation or its own damnation? Let it take care of itself. Nature hasn't much use for exotics; the strongest plants will survive while the weaker die out."

"That may be true," she replied, "but I have seen the weakest die, you have not. I belong to this world of industry, you don't; that makes all the difference. But I am only wasting your time; I came to keep my promise. You wish to paint me."

"Yes," he replied, "I want to paint you, but you are not wasting my time; what you say only makes me wish more than ever to paint you as a Madonna. What do you say to the Madonna of the Chimneys?"

Aurora smiled then answered, "I am sorry you feel like that. I don't think the chimneys want a Madonna. My friend, Miss Prickles, thinks that what is wanted is the emancipation of women so that they may take their part in this world of industry."

"What does she mean by that?" he asked.

Aurora thought for a moment, then said, "You know there is what is called a Women's Rights Movement?"

"I know there is such a Movement," he replied, "but what they really want I don't know. A few of the women are discontented with their home life, but it doesn't amount to much."

"I see you don't understand," she said. "If you were to speak like that to Priscilla you would find yourself in a cold shower bath. I sympathise with her, but I don't go as far as she does. She thinks women should be as free as men are to lead their own lives. I think there are some things that men can do best, and others that women can. There are some public duties they are better fitted to discharge than men are. They are better fitted to look after the sick. They understand women and children better than men do. There are many matters on which their point of view would be valuable, and I certainly think they should have a more liberal education so as to fit them to take their part in this new world of industry."

"You take the question very seriously."

"It interests me," she replied; "I hear a great deal about it from Priscilla. I have heard her discussing it with other members of the movement and with Dr. Oldbird who is friendly to their cause. Still, I don't see my way to join them."

"Heaven forbid," he said with such emphasis that she laughed; then he added, "You might become a second Miss Prickles if you did."

"Now," she replied, "you see why it would never do to paint me as a Madonna."

That evening Guy introduced the question of Women's Rights at Tattle Hall and found that Miss Penny took a great interest in it, especially on the educational side. She thought there was room for improvement in that direction, and that there was no reason why women should not have the same opportunities of acquiring general knowledge as men had. She was opposed to the idea of women occupying themselves outside the home, except in charitable

work; the home she maintained, was the cradle of the nation.

Mistress Polly was inclined to agree with Miss Penny, but thought women should have more opportunities of occupation outside the home. They both felt that the legal position of women was unsatisfactory, though it was a difficult question which they didn't understand.

Mistress Polly, however, added, "The lawyers are a set of stick-in-the-muds; they think women should have nothing to do with money. They have a lot of old-fashioned wills in their offices, all tied up with red tape, and they get people to sign them who are too busy to waste time in reading all their 'whereases', their 'notwithstandings', and their 'provided always' rubbish. Some of the business men are just as bad; they think of nothing but making money, and when they've made it they don't know what to do with it, so they either put it in a bag and tie the strings tight, or build a fine house and strut up and down in it like a set of peacocks."

The Squire capped this by saying, "You should go and see Priscilla Prickles and Lydia Becker strutting up and down on the platform. I tell you, Guy, it's all damned nonsense."

Dick, who had been listening, began singing the chorus of one of the pantomime songs called "Men's Wrongs"—'We'll keep up our pecker, in spite of Miss Becker'—and was promptly suppressed by Jim.

Later on, in the smoking-room, when Jane came in to see that they had everything they wanted, the Squire said to her: "Sit down, Jane; Mr. Guy wishes to know what you think of this Women's Rights business."

"Thank you, sir, I am not as young as I was, and though I am getting shaky on my legs, and glad to sit

down when you ask me, I have no patience with women that go rampaging about like roaring lions on public platforms, with tongues twice as long as their bodies and voices like screech-owls. The Almighty created man, and expected him to look after himself when He turned him loose in the garden of Eden, but He soon found out his mistake, so He created a woman to look after him, and a nice mess she made of it through having nothing to do—no cooking, no washing, no clothes to mend beyond sewing a few fig leaves together; no dusting, no nothing. Of course, she got gossiping with that good-for-nothing serpent, and I for one don't blame her; it's just what any of us would have done if we'd nothing else to do.

"I was taught different to that. My mother used to say to me, 'Now Jane you mind the house and let the men do the rampaging outside; your tongue's a bit long, but it'll do no harm so long as you keep doing. It takes two good women to look after one man, and their tongues were given them to tell men the rights of things. But the first thing is to be doing, and to keep doing so long as your legs will carry you. And that's what I've always tried to do, though I say it as shouldn't, and I'm too old now to listen to those who go rampaging about on platforms and don't know how to thread a needle, let alone sew a button on. If you ask me my opinion of such, they are just as bad as the men that are bit with politics, and rampages up and down the country telling a pack of lies to fill the newspapers with and get votes.'"

CHAPTER XI

WHIMS AND SKETCHES

“WEEL, feyther, I be glad to see thee. Yo be still a bit doddery on that leg o’ yours.”

“What else dost expect? I’m noan likely to be doddery on other fowk’s legs, am I?”

“I doan wonder at yore being a bit tetchy, feyther. I reckon rheumatiz be allus wearing to th’ temper.”

“Temper’s reet enough if fowk ud let it alone. I might be on th’ road to th’ churchyard, the way yo talk.”

“Neaw, feyther, yo’ll bring tiz back again if yo snap at everybody like thot.”

“Snap! Who’s snapping? I’d like to know thot. It’s yo as ud werrit the skin off a hog’s back, yo would thot.”

“Si’thee, feyther, theer’s Doctor; he’ll be coming to look at yo. Good arternoon, Doctor; feyther’s ’ere.”

“So I see. I called at his house and found he was out, so I came on here to look for him. You ought not to be out, Sim; the weather’s too cold and damp for you.”

“Weel, Doctor, weather may be a bit moist, but I’m ’ere now, so yo con set yo down and look at my tongue if yo’ve a mind to. An’ while yo’re abeawt it, yo might as weel look at Sal’s, it keeps going wag—wag—wag—nagging away all day. Hoo’s fair scratted me to de-ath. Con’t yo give her summat as’ll dosell her a bit?”

“Your father has not changed much, I see.”

"Not he, Doctor; nor never will, save for the worse, I think he's more tetchy than ever, if yo arst me. Whether it's yore med'cine or tiz as does it, I doan reetly know. Sufferin' doan bring no better spirit in 'im, same as Skewgill ses it should."

"So you have been to the chapel? I must tell the Vicar that one of his finest sheep has been wandering from the fold."

"Ha, ha, Sal! That's a good 'un! Weel done, Doctor. One o' Passon's fattest sheep 'as gone astray from th' fowt. I reckon as Passon'll not be able to carry you back again, Sal; leastways, not without an 'orse an' a strong bit o' rope to 'elp 'im. Hoo's nigh on twenty stone, Doctor, hoo is for sure, neaw as hoo's being fed on th' pure milk o' th' Word, at Skewgill's, thee kneaws."

"Nay, nay, feyther. I'm not turned seventeen stone yet, an' as for Passon, he'll not mind. I go to chapel now and again for a bit of a change, an' to please Susannah an' aw. I looks in on 'er childer at same time. Hoo's not had much to do wi' childer, an' hoo gets gradely narvous abeawt them if so much as a pash o' wint wratches them."

"Aye, Sal, thot's reet enough, but yo han't towld Doctor as yo got Skewgill to coom along and cheer me oop a bit. An' what dost think as he does, Doctor? He goes an' tells me as tribylation be sent to them as is owd to mak um consider theer latter ends. If I'd got the use of my legs as I 'ad forty year ago, I'd a given 'im summat as ud a made 'im consider 'is latter end. I wud thot."

"Neaw, neaw, feyther. He meant weel."

"Aye, 'appen he did; so did Scotch gardener's boy at th' Hall when he turned tap on while gardener wur lookin' down th' hose pipe to see if theer wur owt in it. I 'eard as gardener swore dreadful as soon as he'd

got watter eawt of his mouth, an' him a tay-totaller an' one of th' deacons at chapel an' aw. Yo wur onc't that way yoresel, Doctor, afore yo coom here; but arter thot I reckon yo ratted from chapel an' coom to th' church. Leastways, yo doan go to chapel, an' yo smokes yore pipe an' tak's yore glass o' whisky along wi' Passon as a good churchman should. Not thot yo trouble th' church much, an' I doan wonder at thot neither; for why, fowk gets sick on Sundays same as other days an' yo 'aven't got th' time to waste, an' Passon be long-winded. Aw th' same, he talks sense, an' doan trouble abeawt yore latter end same as Skewgill does. Passon wouldn't ruffle the hair on a mousie's back, he wouldn't. I likes to hear 'im bummin' away; so does Professor, though he goes off to sleep as often as not."

"Neaw, neaw, feyther; will yo never stop? Doctor's larfin' at yore foolishness."

"Foolishness be dommed. If yo wants to 'ear foolishness an' hell fire mixed extry strong, I reckon yo'll get it an' more at th' chapel, when Skewgill's on th' ramp. I reckon it's a kind o' Methody cream for weak stummicks."

"You should turn parson yourself, Sim, and then you could set us all right."

"Nay, nay, Doctor; it's Sal here as has the makings of a passon in her. Put 'er on a tub an' she'd talk for an hour on 'eend, so long as bottom o' th' tub ud not give way an' let 'er doon."

"Neaw, feyther, yo know weel enough as I doan holt wi' Women's Rights, as they call 'um. Women's more than enough to do keeping their men eawt o' th' pub, an' looking arter th' childer an' aw."

"Keepin' eawt o' th' pub be dommed. It wur thy mother as druv me to th' pub; but for 'er I mowt 'ave been a tay-totaller."

“Ha, ha! Sim, that’s the best joke I’ve heard for a long time. I must tell that to the Squire and the Vicar. When did you get that in your head?”

“Feyther tow’d Susannah that t’other day; he did thot. I reckon mother would have had summat to say about women’s wrongs.”

“It’s easy for yo, Sal, to talk about women’s rights and women’s wrongs. Sam’s a deal too soft wi’ yo, an’ as for childer, yo’ve ’ad ten an’ never a lost one. What more do yo want? It ain’t natteral as yo should want more; but theer’s other women as ’ave nowt to do and can’t find owt to do neither, same as datters o’ th’ rich people as has nowt to do but play theyselves, like bees as don’t make no honey. Theer’s that Prickles; hoo goes werritin’ rownt like a ’en as wants to lay an egg an’ con’t find a place to set down in. Susannah’s bad enough with her young tay-totallers, but she has a bit of a family to keep her eawt o’ mischief; an’, arter aw, theer’s summat in ’er tay-total doin’s so long as she keeps to young ’uns an’ doan trouble about us owd ones, an’ I reckon it does young ’uns good. But thot Prickles goes scrattin’ reawnt, an’ sheawting on platforms an’ stirring up trouble.

“Then theer’s Jobling’s datter, as fine a lass as ever was. Why doan she marry? I doan see no good in ’er larning to nuss fowk at th’ hospital if she’s never going to have no babbys of her own. If I wur her feyther I’d see as she married an’ ’ad a family, too, same as Sarah here, I wud thot. I reckon it be bad for country if aw th’ fine women go scrattin’ reawnt an’ sheawting theyselves hoarse aw abeawt their rights and their wrongs, instead o’ gettin’ babbys. So long as they leave th’ owd hens as is mostly aw ’ead an’ no tail to do th’ sheawting, I doan see much harm in it; keeps um from gossiping, it does thot. But a fine lass

like Jobling's datter! Why, if I wur Prime Minister of England, I'd mak a law as state should fine aw th'gals as he thinks ought to marry, an' I'd only give um six weeks to think better of it. I wud thot."

"Hear! Hear! You should go into Parliament, Sim."

"Nay, nay, Doctor. Women'll get into Parliament afore I does."

"Weel, feyther, when aw's said and done there be some things as they knows better till men."

"What things?"

"Childer, specially girls, an' houses, an' such like. An' I'd 'ave um about hospitals an' workusses, an' they mowt look in on a prison now and again."

"Didn't I tell you, Doctor? Sal's an out-an-out Women's Righter. Hoo is thot, but being a woman hoo's contrary an' ses hoo isn't. When her ten birds be on th' wing hoo'll be eawt o' th' house an' on th' tub, an' there'll be no stoppin' 'er. I wouldn't be Sam for summat, nor tub neither for the matter o' thot, not when Sal gets on it."

"Well, Sim, I must be going. I don't think there's much the matter with you now. You'll be all right if you'll keep out of the damp and the public-house."

"That's what I tell him, Doctor. Owd flies should keep on the right side of the window-pane."

"Owd flies be dommed. I bean't an owd fly yet, and as to th' pub, theer's nowt wrong wi' a glass o' beer. It wurn't beer as started rheumatiz. I reckon I got it twenty year ago when I wur warking deawn pit. There were some gradely wet places in those days. I mind one o' th' levels in the Quarters Mine, wheer aw th' props were covered over wi' rot like as if it had been snowing cotton wool. Roof wur scrattin' yore back aw th' time, an' watter an' slutch ud squelch oop from flure reet into yore face. Things be different

neaw. Young lads doan kneaw when they be weel off. They doan thot. Why, Sal! Doctor's off!"

"Aye, he tow'd yo as he mun be goin'. Yo'd talk the yed off a mowdiwort, yo wud thot, feyther."

"Weel, Sal, I'm a bit lonesome at times, an' when yo get owd yo like to 'ear th' sound of a voice even if it's but your own. I likes a good crack, I does, so long as it's with friends; an' Doctor's one o' th' best."

"Aye, feyther, but yo did carry on above a bit. It be aw reet wi Doctor, but theer's some as ud take offence at what yo say. Doan yo go talking in th' village about state marrying women off, or they'll say as yore an Anarchist an' they'll scrat yore eyes eawt for yo. If yo talk to Silas as yo did this arternoon, it'll be aw eawt in Tattlefowt in no time wi' a lot thrown in as yo never said."

"'Appen it wud, Sal. 'Appen it wud. They doan mean no 'arm, but they talk above a bit. They do thot. Si wur talking t'other neet."

"Silas be allus talking; he be mostly as bad as yo, feyther."

"Neaw, Sal, do yo want to 'ear what Silas said? If yo do, doan yo mak' no interjectiuns."

"Weel, feyther, what did he say? Eawt wi' it."

"He wur talking abeawt young chap as Master Jim brought wi' him to th' Hall. Wheer dost think young chap be visitin'?"

"How should I know, feyther?"

"He's been visitin' at Joblings."

"I doan believe thot, feyther. Eawr fowk at th' Hall doan 'ave no visitin' wi' Joblings."

"Thot may be, Sal, but I tell yo th' young chap 'as been visitin' at Joblings. Silas wur over on t'other side o' valley at th' 'Pot and Kettle' seeing a friend of his, an' he 'eard Jobling's butler say so."

"I doan believe a word o' it, feyther. Jobling's butler be owd an' dithery on 'is legs an' aw; he never turns eawt on a winter night."

"Yo know too much, yo do, Sal. Th' owd butler be gone, an' a young un be coom in 'is place. A rantin', rowdy Irishman. Silas said as he drank more than most of um an' never turned so much as a hair."

"Silas oughter to keep eawt o' other pubs; he goes too often to 'Archangel,' as it is. He said he would 'elp Uncle John to keep eawt o' th' pub an' aw."

"Silas be reet enough; he doan go as often to th' pub as he did, he only goes now and again for a bit o' fun. Anyheaw, he met Jobling's randy Irish butler theer, a fine-looking chap an' free with his brass. He tow'd Silas as young mon as is staying at th' Hall here 'as been visitin' at Joblings. He said he wur a gradely lad with 'is brushes, an' he'd turned Jobling eawt full-size, like as life."

"Weel, feyther, 'appen he be coomin' arter Jobling's datter. I doan mind 'er name reetly. Summat eawt o' Revelations as showed in th' sky when she wur born, an' as Jobling thowt wur sent special for th' occasion."

"That's as may be, Sal, but her name be Aurora. A reel fine lass she is an' aw. But I doubt young chap's not coom arter her. Butler said as he coom on purpose to put paint on Jobling's big dancing-room. Why eaw'r lads here can't put paint on as well as he con, I doan kneaw."

"Weel, feyther, thot be a queer tale, an' him a friend of Master Jim an' staying at th' Hall. I met him an' Master Jim outside th' church, an' he said as he'd coom an' see me. He said it quite friendly like, but he's noan coom yet. I reckon he's forgotten aw about it."

“Appen he has, but he seemed a nice young chap. If yo see 'im on a Sunday yo con put him wise about it. I'd like to meet him.”

“Aye, feyther, I'll mind an' do it.—Weel! Weel! I never did! If he baint coomin' oop lane neaw!”

“So he be, Sal. 'Tis he, sure enough. Talk o' th' Devil!”

“Howd thee noise, feyther, he's getting nigh th' house. Young dogs have sharp ears, they have thot. Why, he's coming to see us—he is, for sure. Coom in, Mister. Coom in an' welcome. Coom in an' set yo deawn. We be fain to see thee. I thowt as yo'd forgotten aw abeawt us.”

“Not I,” said Hetheridge. “I remembered you right enough, but I have been too busy to come, and Jim has been teaching me Lancashire. I think I can understand you all right now if you'll take your time and don't put it on too thick.”

“Weel, we be fain to see thee now. This be my feyther.”

“Yes, Sim Shivershins. I know him all right.”

“Nay, young mon, yo be mistaken this time.”

“Not I. Here you are, right enough.” Producing his sketch book, Hetheridge continued, “You see, there's your name beside your picture, Sim Shivershins. Jim wrote it down for me.”

“Aye, so it be. Writin's Master Jim's, reet enough. But wheer did'st get picter from?”

“I drew it myself.”

Mrs. Broadbeam was standing behind her father, looking over his shoulder at the sketchbook utterly dumbfounded.

“Weel, I never did!” she said at last. “When did'st draw that?”

“I know, reet enough,” Sim chuckled. “He took it in th' church during sermon; I be dommed if he

didn't. Silas sed as he wur writing betimes aw through sermon. Silas thowt as he wur a good young mon writing down what Passon was saying. I reckon he wur a young Devil. Begging your pardon, Mister. I be getting owd, an' things slip eawt unbeknown now an' again. Doan they, Sal?"

But Mrs. Broadbeam was so annoyed with her father for his want of manners that she stood facing him with her arms akimbo, literally glaring at him. Then she said, "What will the young gentleman think of us, and he coming from the south an' dropping in friendly on us an' aw? Shame on yo, feyther!"

"Neaw, neaw, Sal. Doan yo get in high-strikes. When yo do yo put me in mind o' yore mother. I've begged his pardon. Haven't I, young mon?"

Guy, who was laughing heartily, answered him readily, "If you'll let the Young Devil have his book, he'll draw the Old Devil for you."

Sal and her father looked on while he was drawing, and after a few minutes he handed the sketch-book back again.

"Weel, I never did!" Mrs. Broadbeam exclaimed. "That beats all. Si'thee, feyther, theer's chancel arch and thou'rt on either side a top o' pillars howding it oop, but thour't like th' Devil an' aw. An' si'thee, thy tail's aw curling deawn pillar. He's drawn two of thee, an' they're both as like as two peas. Weel, weel, feyther; thou'rt a gradely Owd Devil, yo be thot. An' si'thee, thy claws are stretching eawt on either side o' thee, howding on to th' walls o' th' church. Weel, weel, Mister; they said as yo'd coom to put paint on Jobling's dancing-room, an' I did think it queer as eawr fowk couldn't put on paint as well as another; but we haven't any here as could twist feyther an' th' devil together on th' wall o' th' church like thot."

"Next time," said Guy, "I must bring my paints with me and paint him as a saint to make up for it. I'll paint him as St. Peter holding up the church."

"Nay, nay, young mon, yo mun mak' it Paul."

"Why Paul?"

"'Cos Paul said as we shud tak' some wine to keep eawr ballys reet."

"Bally, what's bally?"

"It be Lancashire for stummick."

"Neaw, feyther, th' Devil oughter to quote scripture better till thot. It wur Paul as sed it to Timothy who'd got a weak stummick, just as it might be Doctor saying to yo, "Sim, yore innards be eawt o' flunter, yo should tak' a sup o' wine to steady yore stummick."

"Neaw, neaw, Sal. I wur brought up on scripture afore yo wur born. But si'thee, young mon, if yo be going to put me deawn on papper as Paul yo mun put a quart o' beer in my hond. Paul ud not a towld Timothy to waste his time on Port an' Sherry, White Wine an' such like, if he'd knowed what a glass o' good beer wur like. Not he. Them wur but heathen days, an' they kneawed nowt about beer."

Guy noticed that they were both looking curiously at his book but seemed to hesitate, so he said, "Would you like to look through it? You see, I have written Tattlefold on the back of it. You'll find some of your friends in it."

"Thank you kindly," said Mrs. Broadbeam. "That's just what we did want, but we didn't like to ask yo as yo mightn't 'ave liked to say no to us."

"Right you are," said Guy. "Just sit down side by side with the book between you and see if you know who they are."

Sal and her father took the book between them, and, as they sat side by side on the old horsehair sofa,

they turned the leaves over with many comments. "Theer's Squire, si'thee, like as life in his big arm-cheer, wi' his glass o' port wine an' bottle beside him. Aye, an' theer's Master Jim. He be a steady young mon neaw, but as a boy monkeys wasn't in it. Theer's another o' him playing footbaw. An' thot's Mistress Penny; si'thee, feyther, he's made her nose an extry size wi' spectacles on it. Theer's Mistress Polly; I'm glad as yo've put her lad beside her, theer's not a truer lady in th' county than Mistress Polly.—Eh—si'thee, Sal—th'owd Professor, Doctor an' Passon, aw a sittin' yafflin' together. Professor's got 'is big pipe, Passon's got a long clay, an' Doctor has 'is little 'un; an' thot mun be whisky steaming in th' glasses. Ha, ha! thot be Si, reet enough, leaning on his spade; an' theer be another of him sitting cross-legged on a tombstone. Yo be fond o' goblins, young mon. Si'thee, Sal, theer's Sam tending th' cows. An' theer's Gardner an' 'is bull dog wi' a rattan in his meawth. Weel, weel, I never did!"

At last, when they had looked all through, they shut the book up carefully and handed it back to Guy with many thanks for letting them see it. Then, as he said he must be going, they shook hands with him and hoped he'd come again before long.

When he had gone Mrs. Broadbeam said, "Weel, feyther, yon's a reel nice lad; he is, for sure. He's not one of they fellers as go to a meetin' an' poo a long face, an' yo doan kneaw what's behind it. He's a reet friendly lad, an' he ain't afeart o' what fowk may be thinkin' o' him. It's a pity as there bean't more o' thot sort abeawt; it ud cheer place oop a bit if there wur, it wud thot. Yo forgot aw abeawt yore rheumatiz when he wur wi' us."

CHAPTER XII

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

SQUIRE THORNTON had only one daughter, Celia. She had married Morgan Bluepoint, whose cousin Dixon assisted Herbert Temple in the management of the Colliery. Bluepoint was one of the trustees of the Dixon interest in the concern, and had been made a director, but, fortunately for the other two, he only put in an occasional appearance at their meetings. He possessed a handsome exterior, unbounded conceit, and an empty brain. Celia was a fine-looking woman with a fair amount of common-sense of a wooden kind. She was fond of her father, and every Christmas she came to visit him, bringing her husband and family with her, much to the discomfort of everyone at the Hall and of Jane in particular.

Jane went to see her sister Ann in order to relieve her feelings, but Ann was bent on discussing Sarah Broadbeam's proposal about a housekeeper for John Skinner, and wished to hear what Jane thought about that. Not that anything Jane was likely to say would influence her, but she trusted Jane and enjoyed a sisterly disputation. She broached the subject by remarking, "John Skinner's but a feckless body with women, he can't take any more care of himself than a worm on the lawn when a blackbird's about. Sarah's asked me to look after him; they're afraid that some

scheming hussy'll come hopping round and make a mouthful of him and his money. John Skinner's so scared that nothing'll suit him but a woman who'll swear with her hand on the Bible that she'll neither marry him herself, or let anyone else marry him. I'm considering it. Trying it for six months, you understand."

"Well I never, Ann, of all things I ever heard this beats all. To think of your taking on another husband at your time of life, after all you've gone through with your last."

"You needn't trouble your head about my last; he's quiet enough in the churchyard now, and I might have had a worse."

"You might, but not easy, Ann; though men is mostly rampageous, especially on Saturday nights."

"Now, Jane, I didn't ask you to cast any of your aspersions on him; he wasn't worse than the run of them, only a bit audacious now and then."

"I wasn't making any aspersions. It's but common-sense; if you've eaten one bad egg you don't want no more. Yet you're talking of marrying John Skinner."

"I didn't say no such thing. I said I was thinking of taking him, on for six months with a promise."

"Now, Ann, you're a respectable woman and a good housekeeper, but you are not going to tell me you are going to give up your house for next to nothing and take that job on for a six months. Not likely. When the six months are over the worm will be out on the lawn again and the blackbird'll be there too."

"Now, Jane, don't you go for to breathe a word of it to no one or it'll be all over Tattlefold in no time. I might have known you'd be sharp enough to see what could happen. If they want me to put

my hand on the Bible I'll do it. A six months' engagement is a six months' engagement, and that's all there is to it, and that's what I'm considering and no more. So don't you go talking about your blackbirds and your worms to no one."

"Not I, Ann; you're old enough to make your own bed, and you can lie as much as you like on it; it's none of my business. I've enough worrit of my own at the Hall."

"Have you ever known me tell a lie, Jane?"

"No, Ann. Not a real thumper; leastways, not an out-and-out black one. All the same, if that black-bird and the worm are out on the lawn together when the six months are over, I wouldn't say as the black-bird would keep on the outside of the worm—not if it was so disposed—I wouldn't."

"It's all very well, Jane, for you to figure up as the virtuous female that never kept an eye on the ground to see what Providence might drop in front of you. You've a snug place at the Hall, and no one knows it better than you do. I'm but a lone widow getting too old to keep lodgings by myself."

"That's true enough, Ann. We've each got our own worrits, and must bear our own inflictions. As to a snug place at the Hall, little you know about it or you wouldn't talk like that."

"What's up now, Jane? I suppose, Christmas as usual. Is the Squire's daughter bringing the whole circus with her again?"

"She is. And one extra. She's bringing her Blue-point, her two little girls and a nurse, her lady's maid and a valet. The valet's extra. I'd put my foot down on that valet if I was Master, and I'd let the two girls fend for themselves. They are old enough, and they've no brothers to tell them the rights of

things. Each time they comes they put their noses up higher, just like Old Missus and her sisters did. Next time they'll be for bringing an extra footman. It all means more worrit for me. They upset all the maids, and Master Dick makes matters worse by pulling faces at the nurse and teasing the two little girls; and there's Master Jim as can't abide the sight of that Bluepoint, and I don't blame him neither, for that Bluepoint is nothing better than a six-foot barber's pole with a gilt knob of conceit on the top. Snug place, indeed! It's nothing but worrit from one week's end to another. If it hadn't been for Mistress Polly I'd a given up long ago. Not that I don't like Master, he's always open with me, and reasonable, too, except when he's in his tantrums with the gout.

"No, Ann. I'm not complaining, but it's as well as you should know the rights of things when you goes talking about a snug place. All the same, I'd as soon have it as another, and I'm not complaining. I'm too old now to traypus about lawns, and what's more I don't hold with playing the blackbird—not at your age. It's no business of mine, but if I were you I'd think twice before I went about swallowing worms. Worms can turn, and if you were to swallow one I shouldn't say as it mightn't turn in the inside of you. There's no knowing what John Skinner will do with his money until he's dead and buried, and his will's proved sound. A man that's been an' married twice is deceitful above all things; he knows too much. I should leave that worm on the lawn, if I were you. I don't wish to scare you, Ann, but a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, and it's much the same with a worm, blackbird or no blackbird. Six months' trials are uncertain things. I'd have a straight deal if I were you, and no blackbirds."

"Well, Jane, I'm trusting to your saying nothing about it."

On the day when Celia and her family were expected at the Hall the Squire was sitting in his room waiting for Celia to arrive. Polly had gone off in the carriage to meet her at the station, and a cart had been sent for the luggage. They were late, and the Squire was growing restless when Jane looked in. He greeted her as usual. "Come in and shut that damned door. It's beastly cold, a fog's setting in, and it's bringing the smell of the river into the house. It's almost as bad as that damned chimney of Jobling's. The train must have been held up by the fog. I told Polly not to bother about meeting them but she said she must, so there was an end to it."

"And quite right, Master. That's Mistress Polly all over, never thinks of herself, and we all know what Mister Bluepoint is like. You can't ever do enough for him, and never a word of thanks, though I say it as shouldn't. Those who haven't much about them always sniffs the loudest. It's best not to ruffle that sort, it only leads to rumpusses, and a rumpus is like a stone thrown into a pond, you never know where it'll stop."

"Capital, Jane; you are a regular philosopher."

"No, sir. Not noways. There's no philosophy or capital about me. I've got to work for my living—and for that matter I'd sooner work than do anything else, if my legs would only carry me as they used to."

"Sit down, Jane. Sit down, and be damned to your legs. Of course, they get stiff worrying around as you do."

"Thank you, sir. There'll be a lot more worriting now that Mister Bluepoint's about, and his children

travelling all over the place, and Master Dick making faces at them. If it wasn't for Mistress Polly they'd drive us all silly, and nurse as cross as two sticks. It's a good thing Mr. Hetheridge is staying over Christmas. A nice cheerful gentleman, he is; pity he goes messing all over the place with his paints. I hear he's painting that Jobling; he might find something better to do. And there's Jobling's daughter, Aurora; why he ever gave her such a name I don't know. They say in Tattlefold as—— There they are, sir, I'd better go down."

"All right, Jane. Tell Mrs. Bluepoint to come and see me as soon as they're settled, if she's not tired; the others can see me later if they want to."

"I'll do that, Master, only don't worrit if you're kept waiting a bit. Worrit means gout, and when you've gout you're more trouble than a dozen Bluepoints."

"You can go to the devil, Jane."

"Thank you, sir. I'll do what I can, though my legs are not what they used to be."

The Squire's daughter, Celia, came in soon after Jane left. She was a handsome woman still, but added years had brought her ample proportions. She bore down on her father like a three-master with all sails set and gave him a voluminous kiss, saying as she did so, "You are looking well, papa; I hope you will be as well when Christmas is over."

"Damn it all, Celia, you are getting very like what your poor mother used to be. Mind you don't try and come the old soldier over me as she did. You are all alike. The Doctor was here last night and told me to keep off port and try claret this Christmas. Claret, indeed! Rot-gut stuff I call it. Why, a curate would get no farther on it, and it would turn

a hunting parson sour if he was such a fool as to drink it. Everyone knows port's the best thing to bring the gout out of you. As if I could help having gout in me; I got it from my father."

"Yes, papa, and the port too."

"And damned good port; you can't get any like it now, and there's not much of it left. There's no harm in a glass of good port; it would do your husband good if we could make him drunk, it would take the starch out of him. Ha, ha! I must talk it over with Jim and see what we can do."

"If you are going to treat him like that, papa, there's no use our coming for Christmas. I suppose you are glad to see me?"

"Of course I am. You know that well enough, but when you start worrying me like that you mustn't expect to find the lamb in me."

Celia laughed and kissed him again. "I never have seen much of the lamb in you, papa," she said. "Now I must go and see what nurse is doing with the children. I'll send Morgan in to you."

"Damn it all, Celia, won't your Bluepoint keep till dinner?"

"Oh, papa!"

"All right. Send him along if you think he won't keep."

"You'll be nice to him, papa, won't you?"

"I'll try," growled the Squire.

Some days later Bluepoint, Hetheridge and Jim were sitting over their wine with the Squire. The conversation turned on a ball which had been given by the Volunteers at the Drill Hall. Jim was one of the captains, and all three had been present. The dance was attended by a good-humoured crowd, just the kind of crowd that Bluepoint detested. The

Squire knew this, but he could not resist saying to him, "I hear you had a good dance last night. There were over five hundred present, were there not?" Bluepoint hesitated; then, seeing the Squire was waiting for an answer, he replied, "I—er—didn't count them. Rather a mixed lot I thought."

The Squire continued, "I suppose Jim found you some good partners?"

"Er—I didn't dance much. There were plenty of others to take the floor."

"Were none of the girls good-looking enough for you?"

"Er—I—er, asked one of them for a dance. She—er—she just looked at me and then went on talking to someone else."

The Squire now realised that he was treading on dangerous ground, but it was too late. Bluepoint, having started on a grievance, became both persistent and articulate. "I wasn't sorry afterwards when I found it was one of the Jobling lot. Her brother's a horrid little cad, a regular wet crumpet; he was just drunk enough to be offensive. He was rude to me." Then he turned to Jim and said, "I suppose you are obliged to ask those kind of people just because they are rich?"

Jim answered him quietly. "Young Jobling is a little cad, but he wasn't the only one there who had too much to drink; there are always a few fools at a big dance like that."

But Bluepoint, who liked airing a grievance, continued, "The girl looked all right, but I suppose she knew no better. She just turned her back on me and went on talking to Hetheridge there."

Whereupon Hetheridge asked him, "Had you been introduced to her?"

"No—I—er—didn't think an introduction necessary. Not—er—in a crowd of that kind. She must have seen I wasn't one of the rabble."

As Jim was one of the stewards he was naturally annoyed at hearing this, and said sharply, "She must have thought you uncommonly rude. I only hope she looked upon you as a dry muffin devoid of common understanding. Can't you see how awkward you made it for all of us? We aren't in the same set as the Joblings, and I have no doubt Miss Jobling thinks us a very stuck-up lot."

"I—er—don't see—er—why you should mind."

"Oh, don't you—well, all I can say——"

Jim meant to say a good deal, but the Squire rose from the table, saying, "Come, come, this is all damned nonsense. I'm not going to hear any more of it, so you can all go to hell and join the ladies. Now, boys, be doing; you lead the way, Bluepoint."

Bluepoint started readily enough, but as soon as he had passed through the door the Squire locked it and put the key in his pocket. Then he turned to the others. "You can have it out by yourselves, if you like, but you'll find it best to leave a fool to his folly. Now we'll finish that bottle, and then we can go and see what kind of a tale he has told in the drawing-room. He's a conceited puppy; when he begins yapping there's no end to it. You'd better leave him to his wife and to Polly; they'll manage him all right."

The Squire was not without experience in such matters, for during most of his married life he had had to contend with his wife and her three silly sisters.

When they went into the drawing-room they found Miss Penny alone. The Squire asked her what had happened, but she was discreet, and did not wish to satisfy his curiosity. In answer to the question,

"Where have they gone to?" she replied, "I think Mistress Polly has gone to see if the children were asleep. I do not suppose it will be long before she returns."

"Mr. Bluepoint left us, Miss Penny. I thought he was going to join you here?"

"He did, and he went with the others. I think he is with his wife now."

"Did he tell you anything about the ball? Did he say whether he enjoyed it or not?"

Miss Penny took her spectacles off, wiped them carefully with her pocket-handkerchief, then blew her nose, put her spectacles on again and looked very earnestly at the Squire before answering. "I fear he did not enjoy it," she said. "He entered into a long account of some incident that disturbed him; but, as I am rather deaf, I found it rather difficult to follow him."

Then she continued in a dreamy way, as if she were solving some difficult problem, quite unconscious of the presence of the others, "He seems to be curiously devoid of understanding, and quite unable to appreciate any other point of view but his own, yet he holds a very exaggerated notion of his own importance. He is undoubtedly a very foolish person. I am given to understand that his mother spoilt him. Whether that be so or not, it would be too much to expect any improvement now; nevertheless we ought to do all in our power to help his unfortunate wife who apparently married him for his handsome exterior. I fear such cases are not unusual."

Miss Penny's meditations were brought to a sudden close by an outburst of laughter. For a moment a puzzled look crossed her earnest face, then she said gently, "I am afraid I didn't quite catch your question."

Which only led to further laughter. That distressed her, so the Squire said, "Thank you, Miss Penny, you have answered my question; and, if the others have no more to say, we will leave you now and go to the smoking-room."

Christmas and New Year were kept in a very different manner at Goldmark Hall. Every room in the house was occupied by members of the family and their friends. Mr. Jobling fancied himself a second Mr. Wardle, of Manor Farm, Dingley Dell; and as many of his guests were young business men who had few holidays they entered into his humour with more than Pickwickian energy.

Hetheridge, who was unable to continue his work in the ballroom, came occasionally to help Aurora and her sisters to get up charades, dances, and other entertainments. Among the most successful of the latter were a series of Tableaux Vivantes in which Mr. Jobling appeared as Father Christmas wheeling an enormous bottle of champagne across the stage. Another tableau showed Mr. and Mrs. Jobling as Jupiter and Juno amid muslin clouds illumined by occasional flashes of lightning accompanied by appalling crashes of thunder. Mr. Jobling also posed as Cæsar entering Rome with his daughters tied captive to his chariot.

Aurora and Eggy had been the only members of the house-party present at the Volunteer Ball. Mr. Jobling was not a volunteer, but he was a most liberal supporter of the movement and had been the chief subscriber to the building fund for the Drill Hall in Tattleton. Aurora attended the ball as his representative, but she refused to dance with Hetheridge on that occasion because he came with the Tattle Hall party. Hetheridge thought this unreasonable at the time, but

he realised that she was right when he heard Bluepoint's account of the dance.

He admitted this to Aurora when they were arranging the tableaux, and added, "I think you ought to know that my friend Jim Thornton was as much annoyed as I was at his brother-in-law's conduct, and told him what he thought of him. I wish you knew Jim, I am certain you would like him."

She replied, "That may be so; but I don't think you have the least idea how exclusive the different cliques in a town like Tattleton are, and how difficult it is for members of one set to have any intercourse with those of another. The Thorntons belong to the old county set; they belong to Tattlefold—you might almost say they *are* Tattlefold. We, on the other hand, belong to the new town of Tattleton. They look upon us as upstarts. I don't mind, but my father does; he would dearly like to be in the county set. Naturally, I don't wish to expose myself to rudeness. You wouldn't wish me to, would you?"

"Certainly not, but some day these absurd divisions will have to be broken down, and I can't imagine anyone better fitted to do so than you."

"Can't you? I don't think you understand how helpless women are apart from their menkind."

"You are the very last person I should think of as helpless," said Guy.

"I think I must refer you to my friend, Priscilla," she remarked.

"Priscilla!" exclaimed Guy. "Why, she's rabid on the question of Women's Rights."

"You are not fair to Priscilla," she replied. "I don't go quite as far as she does, but I can't shut my eyes to the fact that women have little standing apart from their menfolk. I am unusually free, yet even

I am tied by the customs of this neighbourhood. I am a woman, and I belong to the chimneys of Tattleton."

"Surely that need not always be so," he objected.

Aurora saw the look of admiration in his eyes, and replied, "Ah! That is more than I can say."

She stood looking at him with an inscrutable smile on her face, a smile which reminded him of Leonardo's Monna Lisa. As he watched her Guy longed to paint her; he also wondered what that smile might mean. Then it died away, and she said rather wearily, "You, at least, have no sympathy with Tattleton."

The Christmas festivities at Goldmark Hall ended with the New Year's Ball, a really big affair, to which many of the neighbours were invited. All the arrangements for it were made regardless of expense; or, as Grandpa expressed it, of commonsense. The chief responsibility for seeing that everything ran smoothly on the night of the ball rested on Aurora and her two sisters, for their mother was kindly but unobservant, and their father futile and fussy.

Fortunately, Aurora was practical, and had a quick eye and ready tact for dealing with shy youths, inexperienced girls and hungry spinsters. At first her duties as hostess kept her occupied; but later, when the programmes were all made up, she also joined in the dancing.

The ballroom was left bare, all except the circular ends which were decorated with Christmas evergreens, camellia plants and fine tropical lilies from the celebrated Goldmark gardens. The musicians sat at one end, and at the other chairs were placed for the chaperones. By this arrangement the whole of the dancing floor was left free for the dancers. The music was excellent, the performers being led by the conductor of the Wiggleton Assemblies, and the floor was perfect.

Guy had been looking forward to waltzing with Aurora. When they stood up together and the band began playing the "Blue Danube" they both felt the thrill of delight known only to those who are really fond of dancing. They had hardly spoken together since their talk about her position in Tattleton. The memory of that conversation still lingered, but the music cast a spell over them, lulling their senses as with a narcotic, and the scent of the lilies came to them as in a dream. Priscilla, who was a shrewd observer and a most loyal friend, was naturally concerned in anything that might affect the happiness of Aurora and, as she watched them dancing, she wondered what might be the outcome.

Next day Mr. Jobling discussed the ball with his wife, and congratulated himself on its success. She was easy-going and had learnt by experience that he liked taking credit for anything which had proved successful, so for a time she humoured him as usual. But she had not recovered from the effects of the ball, and there is a limit to the patience of the most easy-going when they are tired out. At last she remarked, "Yes, Josiah, there is no doubt the arrangements were excellent. But things would not have gone so smoothly if the girls had not been in charge; they looked after everyone."

Mr. Jobling said "Hum!" But his wife continued, regardless of that well-known signal. "I don't know, Josiah, what I should have done without Aurora this Christmas. She is a most excellent hostess, so observant and tactful; I wonder where she gets these qualities from."

"Hum!" said Mr. Jobling with gathering emphasis, but his wife went on, "I think her experience at the hospital has helped her. She certainly doesn't get

those qualities from either you or me; she does everything well without any fuss. And, what is more, she doesn't think she is doing anything wonderful or out of the way as some do. I think that is why everyone admires her so much."

"HUM!" Mr. Jobling repeated the ejaculation in his most impressive manner.

"Yes, Josiah dear, you have said 'hum' three times. Is there anything the matter?"

Mr. Jobling was chairman of many companies and was usually a ready speaker, but words failed him on this occasion. He collapsed like a pricked bubble, and said meekly enough, "No, Sophia dear."

"I thought, Josiah, that you were about to say something about Aurora."

"No, dear," he replied.

"Then," said his wife, "you may not have noticed that she seems to be attracted by that young artist."

"Pooh, pooh, Sophia. She would never think of Hetheridge; he's only a poor artist. You were quite right in saying Aurora would make an excellent hostess. Unfortunately, she won't look at any of the young men about here; she keeps them all at arm's length."

"She does," his wife admitted. "I am really glad she is leaving home for awhile. Perhaps in another neighbourhood she may meet someone she fancies. When Lord Newpen was here I thought he admired her, but unfortunately Grandpa was so rude to him."

"He was very rude to me, Sophia. He is quite unbearable at times. He has always encouraged Aurora to be independent."

"Yes, Josiah, he has; he is very fond of her, and I expect he will leave her most of his money; that is, unless she marries someone he doesn't like. Lord Newpen, for instance."

"If she married Lord Newpen that wouldn't matter."

"How can you say that, Josiah? You have always told me that Grandpa must be worth more than half a million."

"So he is, but Lord Newpen is a very distinguished man. He has several fine properties, and the Inkover Estate is one of the great country houses in the Midlands. Nor must we forget that he is a lord. If he fancies Aurora, she ought at least to consider him."

"If she did, Josiah, I am quite certain Grandpa wouldn't leave her a penny. Don't you remember his saying—'Sly dog, Newpen; married money, then got rid of his wife. Wants another rich fool to keep his house and look after his two children.'"

"Yes, I remember well enough. He wanted to annoy me; that's why he said it; and when I told him how grieved Lord Newpen was at the loss of his wife, he said, 'Umph! Crocodile's tears cost nothing.' No, Sophia, I am very much disappointed in Aurora. She won't see that the best thing she can do is to get married. She is far too independent, and Grandpa only encourages her."

"There's no use talking like that, Josiah. You mustn't expect her to look through your eyes now. Your only chance was to get her married directly she left school. She's had too many proposals. Proposals are very unsettling; besides that, as soon as one young man was disposed of you insisted on her looking at another. There's no use talking to her about a daughter's duty to you. This is a matter she will decide for herself. She hasn't joined the Women's Party yet, but if you interfere now I shan't be surprised if she does. Grandpa would only laugh at you if she did."

Shortly after this the house-party at Goldmark Hall broke up and the various members of the family returned to their houses. Aurora also arranged to leave home while one of the cousins came to stay with her mother. Before she left, Priscilla came to spend the afternoon with her. Priscilla was interested to hear that she was going to stay with an old school-fellow named Flora Mackay who lived at Filby Green, a village on the North-east Coast.

"I am glad you are going there," said Priscilla; "they are distant relations of mine, but I only know Flora's mother. Have you ever met her?"

"No, I haven't. When Flora was at school with me her father and mother spent most of their time in the south of France and in Italy on account of Mr. Mackay's health. After Flora left school she went abroad to join them. We corresponded for a time, but she was interested in art and foreign travel and I was occupied at the hospital, so we lost touch with one another. But I am glad to have this opportunity of renewing our friendship. I had no idea you were related to her. When did you see her mother last?"

"At Nice. Mr. Mackay was taken ill there. I saw a good deal of her then, and I stayed on with her for some time after his death. I was much attracted by her; she was very devoted to her husband, and his death was a great blow to her. She was wrapped up in her family, and used to talk to me about her son, Roy, and how much she had felt being separated from him. Did Flora speak of him to you?"

"She did, indeed," Aurora replied. "I used to get quite tired of hearing her praise him. Of course, we were only school-girls, but I remember thinking he must be a regular prig."

"That may be so," said Priscilla. "Still, from what his mother told me, he was a good son. I believe he is still unmarried. Good sons make good husbands, Aurora. Don't forget that."

"Don't look at me like that, Priscilla. If you have any more copy-book maxims you want to get rid of, get rid of them and have done with it."

"Very well, I will. Newpens are more useful to the inartistic than paint-brushes. It is best to try a new pen before writing with it. It is not always safe to play with a new pen."

"Please translate."

"I met Lord Newpen at Dr. Oldbird's yesterday. He asked after your father and you, especially after you. He happened to be in Wiggleton and came to see Dr. Oldbird about some educational scheme. Rather curious, I thought."

"Very. I know he has some scheme in hand for a new college at Oxbridge, for he tried to interest papa in it, but papa would have nothing to do with it, and grandpa was rude to him, so I did not see very much of him. Now you know all about it, Priscilla."

"That makes it more curious still, for this new scheme is for the manufacturing districts; some kind of organization that would provide popular lectures on science, literature and art for the workpeople at a nominal charge. He wants Dr. Oldbird to interest your father in it; but I thought he was even more interested in you, Aurora. He seemed very disappointed when I told him you were leaving home."

"I expect you imagined that."

"I did nothing of the kind. I am accustomed to put two and two together, and I should be sorry to see you commit your future to either Lord Newpen

or Hetheridge without carefully considering what you were doing."

"Am I likely to do so?"

"Has Hetheridge finished painting you?"

"No. He is going to finish it when I come back again."

"I am sorry about that, Aurora, for I noticed you enjoyed dancing with him, and it struck me you were almost carried away."

"How carried away?"

"I said almost carried away."

"By what?"

"By, let us say, a wave of passion."

"Passion, Priscilla! What do you mean?"

"I think you know what I mean. You can't deny that you are attracted by the charm of Hetheridge's bright youth, and that he is attracted by your beauty. Don't forget that you can have no real share in his life as an artist. Remember art is everything to him. Think what would remain for you both if the charm of his youth and your beauty should fade—as fade they must—and leave you nothing lasting. Nothing you could really share."

"You needn't preach, Priscilla. You called me cold-blooded the other day; now you bid me beware of passion, and even warn me against youth and beauty. I think it is you that are cold-blooded; in any case, you are inconsistent and unreasonable."

"I may seem so, Aurora, but you said much the same thing to me about the spoilt lives that you saw when you were working in the hospital, and that what is true of one class is true of another though it may be less apparent. Remember passion is not love—not the real love which alone can bind two souls together until death. Passion is useful on the stage to

capture the attention of the audience and lead to those tragic endings so beloved by the emotional, but commonsense and steady purpose are safer guides."

"Here endeth the first lesson by the Rev. Priscilla Prickles. While you were about it, you might have threatened me with everlasting punishment."

"I am sorry you feel like that. Perhaps I did exaggerate, but I spoke out of real affection for you."

"I know that, but I'm getting tired of all this talk of marriage. I am afraid if I don't marry soon papa will rush me into marrying someone I don't care for in the least."

"I can only say that is a very dangerous state of mind, Aurora. I'm glad you are going away; you want a change, especially now your work at the hospital is at an end. You need to be amongst new people and in fresh surroundings. It's quite time you went."

When Priscilla left, Aurora went into the library. Grandpa was there apparently asleep, but as she turned to leave the room she was surprised to hear, "Umph! Is Miss Prickles gone?"

"Yes, Grandpa."

"Umph! Priscilla stayed a long time." Grandpa looked sharply at his grand-daughter, then continued, "Priscilla's been prickly, eh? Means well. Expect she told you to avoid Scylla and Charybdis." Grandpa peered at her for a minute or two, then patted her hand and said, "Priscilla's an idiot. Papa's an ass. Don't be a fool. Take your time."

When Aurora left him she went to her room and stood looking out through the window at her father's chimney. Then she laughed. Some women, in those days, would have cried.

CHAPTER XIII

AN INVITATION

HETHERIDGE was walking past the churchyard when he was hailed by Silas. "'Ast got drawin'-book with yo?" Guy turned round in the direction from which the voice came; then, seeing the head and shoulders of Silas showing above-ground beside a heap of earth, he laughed heartily, took a piece of paper out of his pocket and began drawing.

"What art doing?" shouted Silas. "I be dommed if he baint drawin' me. Dang it aw, Mister, I'm noan so bad-looking as yo need be putting me on nowt but a bit o' papper."

"So you've heard about my sketch book? I suppose Sim Shivershins told you."

"'Appen he did, an' 'appen he didn't. 'Ast got sketch book theer?"

"'Appen I have, an' 'appen I haven't," replied Guy.

"Thou'rt not a Lancashire lad, I reckon, an' never will be neither. If thou hast sketch book theer an' hast a mind to show it me, I'd be fain to see it."

"Sorry I haven't got it with me now, but I'll show it to you some other time."

"I be main sorry too. I'd like to see it, thee kneaws, so long as yo doan mind."

"Mind? Not I. I'd like to show it you, and I will some day."

"What 'ast put down on that theer papper?"

"A gargoye for the church."

"What be a gargoil?"

"What do you think it is?"

"Nay, I doan kneaw, unless it be summat to howd oil in, same as Romans use. I never could abide their tricks."

Instead of answering, Guy went up to him and showed him what he had drawn.

"Weel, I'm dommed if he ain't made me into a watter-spout. Look 'ere, young mon, I ain't joined taytotallers yet nor likely to. Yo'd better mak' Susannah into a watter-spout."

"She'd get a subscription out of me if I did."

"'Asn't hoo got one eawt o' yo yet?"

"No—not yet. I'm thinking about it."

"Tak' keer as yo doan think too long. It ain't no manner o' use letting yore mind rest on watter; that's how fowk get watter on the brain, same as Susannah has."

"You mustn't run down water. I use a lot of water-colour in painting."

"I'd like to see some o' thy wark. Would yo coom to pub some neet an' show it to us theer? We'd like to see thee."

"Very well. I'd like to come."

"Wud yo? We'll be reet fain to see yo theer, an' sketch book too. Yo'll not forget sketch book?"

"All right, I'll bring it."

"'Appen Passon'll not like yore cooming to pub, though. What dost think? I'd not like to get yo in trouble."

"The Vicar won't mind, he's too much sense. It won't be the first time I have been in a pub. Only, mind, I won't take more than a glass or two of beer. I remember once when I was on a walk I went into

a pub and there were a lot of workmen there—real good fellows—and like a fool I stood them drinks, then some of them insisted on standing me one. I didn't want to hurt their feelings but I couldn't get through it all."

"Wert gradely drunk?"

"No. Not gradely drunk as you call it, but I had more than I wanted; they gave me some special old ale, mild enough to taste, but stronger than it looked."

"Aye, I knows it. 'Thot's the reet sort, an' it's noan so easy to say no to. Weel, did'st get whoam aw reet arterwards?"

"Yes. As I told you, I wasn't drunk, but I felt like a water-butt in a thunderstorm; so I took a longer walk than I intended to walk it off. I must have walked twenty miles before I felt right again."

"Aye, yo wud—if thot's yore way of thinkin'. Most of us enjoys getting on a bit, an' last thing as we'd do would be to start walking it off. I never heard o' such a thing, walking off good ale like thot. Walkin' it off be dommed! Yo mowt as weel drink watter if yo've no more sense till thot. I likes to sit it off wi' a pipe in my meawth in an arm-cheer by th' side o' th' fire, wi' one or two o' th' chaps as is the same way of drinking as mysel' for company. What art laughing at?"

"You. Now, look here, Silas. I'll be glad to come and see you at the pub, but I'll not drink more than a couple of pints of beer."

"Weel, weel; I doan know what world's cooming to. A fine young mon like yo an' aw. Why, yo be half-ways on to a tay-totaller. Times be changing, they be thot. But we'll be reet glad to see yo at pub aw t'same. Wilt coom to th' 'Archangel' next Saturday neet?"

"Right you are, I'll come. I've nothing on then. Many thanks."

"An' yo doan mind bringing sketch book wi' yo?"

"No. I'll be glad to let you see it, and I'd like to make a sketch or two there if you think the others won't mind."

"I'll see as they doan mind, I will thot. They'll be glad to see yo, yo understand."

"That's all right. Is the church open? I'd like to look round if it is."

"Aye, it's open reet enough; though as to lookin' reawnt, I reckon yo've done thot afore."

"What do you mean?"

"Mean, young mon? I be owd, but I bean't blind yet. I seed yo reet enough in th' owd pew theer, looking aw reawnt yo instead o' listening to sarmon. Some o' th' fowk thowt as yo wur a good young mon takkin' notes o' th' sarmon—mostly women, thee kneaws. Other fowk thowt as yo didn't know how to behave yoursel', not heeing used to church an' being wantin' in respect for Passon, but I tow'd um straight as yo only did it in sarmon time, an' sarmons be mighty long an' aw. I reckon th' owd monks used to draw th' cardinals being thrut deawn into hell by devils wi' long toasting forks. Leastways, a mon as coom lecturing on Italy showed us some picters of it. Passons can't expect to have it aw theer own way both in pulpit an' out, same as bishops do. We be lucky in having a good un here, though he does howd on a bit too long. Fowk as wants their feelin's wratched ud sooner hear Skewgill. If yo wants thot kind o' milk-churning, go to 'is chapel an' yo'll get as much Hell fire thrown in as'll last yo a life-time. Tasties differ; some likes beer an' some likes gin. I reckon it doan matter much so long as it makes yore innards feel comfortable."

"I haven't sampled Skewgill yet. Passon, as you call him, is a real good sort, but he does take his time in the pulpit."

"Aye, he does thot; time'll coom when fowk'll stond it no longer an' there'll be extinguishers put above th' pulpits, same as yo put a candle eawt wi', only bigger. I see as yo be lookin' at th' owd toomb, th' mon on top be one of Squire's ancestors. A Hantiqueery as coom lookin' reawnt said as th' gentry went abeawt covered wi' steel plates like thot at time of Crewsades; an' they'd go on top o' an armour-plated 'orse 'acking a road through th' crowd o' other fowk as 'ad mostly nothings on. Sometimes crowd wur too much for um, an' ud poo them deawn off th' horses, an' then they'd not be able to get oop again cos of aw th' steel plates atop of um. Then theer'd be a regular how-do to get at um; if they couldn't crack um open wi' stones, th' crowd—thot is, th' ennemy—mowt light a fire reawnt um an' finish um off thot road. Just as yo'd hot a lobster oop. Seems to me a funny sort of feighting, but Hantiqueery said as it wur true."

"I see this old fellow has his legs crossed, so he must have been to one of the Crusades."

"Aye, Hantiqueery said so. Yo see as his nose is knockit off. I'd a liked to ask Hantiqueery whether he thowt it wur Oliver Cromwell or dustin' as 'ad done it. World's better than it used to be I'm thinking. Th' owd Jews wur a rough lot o' devils, allus sticking spears under their neighbours' fifth rib. Fancy David hewing Agag in pieces afore th' Lord, same as if Gladstone ud tak' his axe an' sputter Dizzy aw abeawt flure o' Parliament heawse. Even in Psalms, when David wur singing just beautiful, he'd put in an outrageous verse or two to show as he 'adn't forgot his enemies. I reckon Jews wur three parts heathen."

"I'm not so sure that we are very much better now. We don't slice people up in the same way as the old Jews did, but we kill far more with our guns."

"Aye, we dun thot; but, aw th' same, world be better till it wur. Theer's more fun intil it. Leastways, theer wur when I wur young afore they warks wur started at Tattleton. Now theer's nowt but machinery in buildings a-bussing like a lot o' bumbles as can't get eawt o' th' winder. Seems to me as machinery an' eddication be killin' aw th' fun eawt o' th' world, an' everyone wants t'others to go same road as they do. Theer's tay-totallers wants us aw to drink watter. Even Master Jim as wur as foo o' tricks as a monkey when he wur a boy is most as proper as a churchwarden neaw."

"Jim's right enough. He's keen on his work, that's all. He takes things more seriously perhaps, but it's only natural that he should."

"Aye, thot's aw. World's getting more serious, thot's aw. Fowk think of nowt but how to make things cheap by machinery, an' then they get fond o' brass, thot's aw. Like Jobling theer, him as yo go painting for. They call 'im Stink o' Brass."

"Mr. Jobling doesn't hoard his money as some of the others do. But I think you're right about people getting too keen on trading and money-making, and that they are losing their sense of humour. I come from the south; we have more laughter and sunshine there."

"Yo may have a bit more sun deawn theer, but as to fun I'd sooner go abeawt amongst Lancashire lads and lasses for thot. I heard as yo coom from th' South, an' some o' chapel people 'as it as yo coom from a hotter place. 'Ast been to Skewgill's yet?"

"No, not yet."

"Dos't mean to go?"

"Some day, perhaps."

"'Appen yo'll tak' a sketch book wi' yo; an' yo do, yo'd better tak' some o' th' collier lads wi' yo. Theer'll be a fine rumpus if yo start sketching in chapel. Skewgill's th' hottest Methody this side Wiggleton."

"I know Skewgill all right; he's a fine fellow in a way, but he's got a tile off."

"Ow! So you've met Skewgill, 'ave yo? Did you mak' 'im laugh?"

"Yes. I did." Guy laughed as he recalled the occasion.

"Wur it a reel 'earty laugh?"

"Not quite; it seemed to come out in spite of him as if he were ashamed of it. But his wife was with him."

"Wur she? An' did she laugh an' aw?"

"No. She'd got Shadrach in her arms. She had been showing him off to me and trying to get me to join her Young Tee-totallers, so I couldn't resist saying I supposed he was a young tee-totaller. I asked if he'd walked about in the fire yet."

"Did yo? Thot's how yo got eawt o' giving Susannah a subscription. I reckon hoo won't have no use for yo among her tay-totallers arter thot."

"I don't think she will."

"Weel, weel. I likes a glass o' beer an' I likes a good tale. Neaw, Susannah ain't got no use for one or t'other. If hoo'd been at marriage of Cana in Galilee hoo'd a wanted aw th' wine turnt into watter. I doan doubt if hoo coomed into th' 'Archangel' on a Saturday neet hoo'd look reawnt on us an' turn aw th' beer sour."

"I didn't know you were such an authority on the Bible. I must make a water-colour drawing of you as a cardinal, with a small boy swinging a censer in front of you and two more at the back holding up the

train of your scarlet robe. I'll have it ready for you next Saturday."

"Nay, nay, young mon. Yo mun do nowt o' th' sort. I'd sooner have to do wi' Skewgill than such popish tricks. I wur brought oop on th' Bible, an' theer's nowt abeawt such doin's i' th' New Testament. It wur Aaron in th' Owd Testament as carried on thot road. Nasty mess he made of his clothes an' his beard wi' sacred oil aw a running down 'im. Weel! I mun finish grave before neet, if I con."

Silas led the way out of the church. After locking the door he pointed to one of the graves. "Didst ever see a Lancashire wrostring bout?"

"No, never."

"Weel, chap as lies at bottom o' thot theer grave be Billy Burstall. He wur as broad as he wur long an' he weighed nigh on twenty stun in nowt but 'is drawers. Weel, some forty year sin a lot of us colliers went off to Wiggin for a bit of a do, an' at th' fair theer wur a big tent wi' a board in front saying as Sampson wur inside, an' anyone as could throw him ud get a barril of ale for his trouble. Some of us went in just to see what wur goin' on, an' theer reet enough wur a big bouncing rumbustious young feller as sed he'd wroastle any mon for a barril of ale. An' behint him wur beer barril reet enough. Weel, we thowt as we could do wi' thot theer beer barril, but we kneawed as these chaps at fair wur a shifty lot o' fellers, an' we wur feart if Sampson saw Billy Burstall both Sampson an' beer barril mowt slip eawt o' th' back o' th' tent, so we put our yeds together to see what we could do.

"One of colliers said as he knew th' woman as kept beawse for th' curate an' 'appen he could get the loan of an' owd suit o' blacks. Weel, he got th' owd suit,

an' a black clergy hat an' a white tie. Curate wur a stocky chap, but we got Billy into clothes though they wur a bit tight; an' he looked grand, wi' a grey beard stuck on his chin, an' blue specs over his eyes and a big umbrella in his hond. Then we goes to wrastling tent. Young chap an' barril wur still theer reet enough; an' young chap begins strutting oop an' deawn an' talking big to try an' draw us on, but none of us wur having any. An' then Billy coom in aw by 'imself, an' stonds lookin' at young chap aw bent oop leanin' on his big umbrella until young chap 'ad enough of 'im an' ses, 'You'll know me again when you see me.' An' Billy shakes 'is 'ead slowly an' answers 'im, 'Appen I will. They tell me as yo call yoursel Sampson.'

“‘They’ve told yo reet.

“‘ Strikes me yo favver th’ jawbone of an ass. I If wur forty year younger I’d put thee on thy back for aw thy talk o’ Sampson.’

“‘This riled the young feller, an’ he said he’d have no more o’ his talk an’ he’d better stop it. An’ Billy laughed and shook his ‘ead, and said it wur easy to talk, an’ he wished he wur younger to give th’ young jackass summat to think on, even though he wur a Passon; an’ we joined in till we got young feller’ eaten up. We said as he’d better shift Billy eawt o’ th’ road an’ get on with ‘is business, so at last young chap took holt on Billy for to turn ‘im eawt o’ th’ tent, an’ Billy seizes young chap reawnt waist an’ ‘as ‘im on ‘is back in no time. But th’ blacks wur aw brast reet down, an’ theer wur nowt left on Billy but a dicky an’ a white tie. An’ someone ‘ad run away wi’ ‘is clothes, an’ yo never ‘eard such a rumpidge in aw yore life. An’ when we’d got barril of beer away, barril wur foo o’ watter. Aye, Billy wur a grand wroster; but I berrit ‘is wife atop o’ ‘im, for aw thot.’”

CHAPTER XIV

FILBY GREEN

FILBY was an old-world village on the north-eastern coast of England, some eight miles south of the great industrial district and port of Stamford. Owing to its position Filby had become a favourite local seaside resort, and in the process of development had thrust a number of uncompromising roads into the country. A long hillside stretched north of the village, ending in Filby Head, from the foot of which the famous Reef thrust its rocky spine far out to sea.

Filby Head was a fine viewpoint whence the village could be seen spread out below like a map. Above the old village ran a long uneven line of better houses standing on the sloping hillside, with their gardens falling gently towards the south. A broad strip of common ground separated these from the old village, and the name Filby Green had become associated with this suburb. A road led through the common from west to east until it met the storm-swept spur descending from the Head, thence it turned south down past the harbour to the promenade on Filby beach. Strangers coming to Filby Green from the harbour were surprised to find such a peaceful spot on that stormy coast, while those entering from the opposite direction welcomed its quaint charm after the commonplace ugliness of the new village near the station.

Filby Green was known to the old villagers as the place where The Quality lived; The Quality being a select set of old-fashioned gentry who took a mild interest in the welfare of the village and paid their bills regularly. They were mostly retired professional and business men, with some widows and a few others who had come there since the new railway to Stamford was opened. The houses were good substantial buildings with square rooms and ample sash windows, the white-painted woodwork contrasting agreeably with the rich red tone of the weathered brickwork. In one of the largest of these Mrs. Mackay and her daughter Flora lived. Her son, Roy, lodged in Stamford, and only came home for the week-ends.

Mrs. Mackay belonged to an old north-country family. She had married a Scotsman who was engaged in business in Stamford, where they spent the earlier part of their married life until his health failed; then they moved to Filby Green and wintered abroad. After his death she continued to live there, her only anxiety being lest her daughter should suffer from their somewhat secluded life. For that reason she welcomed Aurora's visit, though she felt a little trepidation about entertaining her.

That thought was uppermost in Mrs. Mackay's mind on the afternoon when she was expecting her visitor. She was sitting in the drawing-room with a lighted candle beside her. She had been reading, but her book lay open on her lap with her spectacles resting between the leaves. The lines of her face showed clearly in the candlelight; it was a calm, refined face, and only those who knew her best realised the depth of feeling that lay beneath that outward calm.

When she heard the carriage-wheels on the gravel outside, she put her book down on the table beside

her and turned her face towards the door with a look of expectation.

Mrs. Mackay welcomed Aurora graciously and expressed a hope that she would not find their home too quiet. Flora looked on with some anxiety, for she had found her friend more reserved than she expected, but she was most agreeably surprised and relieved when her mother's welcome was met with a pleasant smile and the ready answer, "I can't tell you how glad I am to find you like this. I have been living in a whirl and am longing for rest and time to think. You will help me to think, won't you?"

As Aurora said that she was surprised at her own words, and at the impulse that had inspired them; but she could have chosen no surer way to mutual understanding and sympathy. Mrs. Mackay replied warmly, "I will, my dear, if I can," and kissed her.

Flora said afterwards, "I never saw my mother welcome any stranger like that before."

Aurora responded by saying, "I can only tell you that I never met anyone who made me feel so completely at home as she did. Curiously enough, I experienced a sense of welcome directly I entered this house."

"I am afraid," her friend remarked, "that you did not feel like that on meeting me."

"No," said Aurora, "to be quite frank I did not. It is a long time since we were together. We have both changed since then, and though we have corresponded I don't think we realised how much we have changed."

"I certainly didn't," Flora agreed, "but I think you have changed more than I have."

"Superficially I suppose that is true, yet under the surface I think we shall find much of our old selves. I have met many more people than you have. With most of them I have found little in common, with

some I have had to be on my guard. Your mother, on the other hand, has a wonderfully quick perception and a ready sympathy. I drew to her instinctively directly she greeted me."

The next day was full of interest for Aurora. On the night of her arrival she had been struck with the charm of her friend's mother and the attraction of their home surroundings, but in the morning she was prepared for a certain amount of disillusion. Everything was so different from her own home; night also, she thought, might have stimulated her imagination. Looking round her bedroom in the morning with a curious sense of comparison, she noticed that the water-colour drawings on the wall were by Flora, and she wondered what Guy would have said about them.

Her first impression of the dining-room still held. Dark oak, blue china against a warm dark paper, portraits of Mrs. Mackay and her husband, some reproductions of old Italian Masters, and a couple of seascapes. The drawing-room pleased her still more; it gave her the same sense of quiet refinement and repose that Mrs. Mackay did. The prevailing colour was a soft grey-green, and there were several small water-colour drawings on the walls by Cox, De Wint and others, but she failed to notice these, for her attention was held by numerous curiosities and mementoes which Mrs. Mackay and her husband had picked up during their wanderings.

Seeing she was interested in these, Flora told her that her mother enjoyed talking about her travels to anyone who cared to listen. Meanwhile, she suggested that they should go for a walk.

The day was cold and clear, with a stiff breeze coming in from the sea. Taking the road towards the harbour,

they turned off by the coast track up to Filby Head and thoroughly enjoyed the keen salt air and the exhilaration of battling with the wind. On reaching the top they turned to look at the village below and the rugged coast-line beyond, stretching far away to the south.

"This is our best view-point," Flora remarked; "so you see we haven't much variety to offer you."

"I think too much variety destroys the strength of one's impressions," Aurora replied. "This air is glorious, and I love the bleak rugged coast; there is something so direct and uncompromising about it. Where I live the valleys are full of the rattle and hum of machinery; the smoke from the tall chimneys taints the air and blackens the hillsides, only the wide moors still keep some of their old charm. Everything is so different here. There is life and freedom in the very air, and there is such a delightful sense of sheltered calm in your home."

"I am glad you feel like that," said Flora; "and that you like this coast. I love it. I like the sea in all its moods. I feel it is a living thing. But there is another side. You see that fantastic rocky spine stretching far out from the foot of the cliff beneath us! That is the much-dreaded Filby Reef. With a full tide and a north-easterly gale the waves break grandly over it; it is a truly magnificent sight, but more lives are lost on that terrible reef than on any other part of all this wild coast. 'Nature red in tooth and claw', can be very cruel, and she is always there, waiting."

"But," Aurora objected, "struggle is a necessary part of existence; I would sooner contend with the forces of nature, however cruel they may seem, than with the greed of man. I have worked in a hospital, and have seen the wrecks of a great town, wrecks of mind and spirit as well as of body, wrecks more dread-

ful than any on this savage coast. I would sooner die on those hard rocks below than suffer on and on in such utter helplessness as I have seen so many do. I respect your shark-toothed reef, there is no deception there; death on those rocks comes of man's daring to brave the forces of Nature."

"I am afraid many of the wrecks are the result of man's greed," replied Flora. "My brother has told us some terrible stories of ships that have left Stamford and have never been heard of again; ships overloaded, over-insured and badly found. He thinks Plimsoll is quite right in what he says about 'Coffin Ships.'"

"How horrible!" cried Aurora. "One is almost driven to think greed is the only god that men worship. Some men seem worse than heathen."

Flora smiled. "My brother thinks men are much what they have always been, and though business men may be heathen, yet their chief god, compromise, is a very useful one. He says there are rogues and criminals in every society."

Aurora felt inclined to ask her friend if she derived all her opinions from her brother, but she refrained from doing so and changed the conversation.

On Friday a telegram came from Roy saying he was coming home that evening and was bringing a friend to stay over Sunday. Mrs. Mackay took it as a matter of course, her only comment being, "I wonder whom he is bringing with him?" But Flora expressed great disappointment.

When they came Aurora was surprised to find that the friend was James Thornton. He was embarrassed when introduced to her, but she set him at his ease by saying, "This is an unexpected pleasure, Mr. Thornton. It seems ridiculous that we should not know one another, living, as we do, in the same

neighbourhood." Then, turning to Roy, she smiled and said, "Your sister has told me so much about you that I can hardly say we are strangers."

Roy laughed and replied, "You mustn't accept my sister's estimate of me; if you do, it will be impossible for me to live up to your expectations."

Aurora answered readily, "It is only fair to tell you that I have deducted a certain percentage from your sister's estimate; that is the correct business term, I believe."

Roy shrugged his shoulders. "I can see Flora has given me away," he said. Flora protested, but her brother continued, "She must have something to idolise. When she was a child she worshipped an old wooden doll with only one eye, no legs or arms, and all the paint off its face; later on she accepted me as a substitute."

His mother intervened. "How you do carry on!" she said. Then, turning to Aurora, she remarked, "He's a dreadful tease, but I hope you will take Flora's part, my dear. I am glad Mr. Thornton is here to keep him out of mischief."

When the two men were alone Jim said to Roy, "Why didn't you tell me Miss Jobling was here?"

"Why should I? How was I to know you lived near to one another? I must say you didn't seem eager for the acquaintance. She's a remarkably beautiful woman, and seems a very attractive one, just the kind of woman to be a leader in society. Head of a salon, you know. An aristocrat from top to toe. I am afraid you haven't made use of your opportunities; with a wife like that you might be Prime Minister."

"Oh, rot! You don't know her people. Her brother's a beastly little cad. Do you remember my sister-in-law Polly, Jack's widow?"

"Yes, very well. She's another first-rate woman;

not such a grand dame, but more human. Why were you so shy at meeting this one?"

"Because this one's brother said Polly was only a barmaid. He said it out aloud at the theatre. I heard him."

"You heard him, did you?"

"Yes," said Jim, "and what's more, he was sneering at her."

"What did you do?"

"I laid hold of the little beast and shook him. I told him he didn't know a lady when he saw one. They made no end of a tale out of it in Tattlefold—said I held him over the pit and threatened to drop him down."

"Any other pleasing incidents between Miss Jobling's family and yours?"

"Yes, one. A very unfortunate one. At our Volunteer Ball my brother-in-law, Bluepoint, an awful stuck-up ass, went up to Miss Jobling while she was talking to Hetheridge, who is painting her father's ballroom. You remember I told you he was staying with us."

"Stop a moment, Jim, till I get the hang of all that. Brother-in-law Bluepoint came up to Miss Jobling while she was talking to Hetheridge. What next?"

"Bluepoint asked Miss Jobling if she'd dance with him. Mind, he hadn't been introduced, and he broke in on their conversation."

"How did she answer him?"

"Refused him civilly enough, and went on talking to Hetheridge as if Bluepoint didn't exist."

"What does Hetheridge think of Miss Jobling?"

"Thinks her good-looking, of course."

"Good-looking! You old mollusc! Why, man, she's the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. Good-looking, indeed! Good old Jim! Do you go about

the world with your eyes shut, thinking of nothing but machines?—Why, man alive, I don't know another woman who's fit to hold a candle to her; and yet—I don't think I'd like to marry her.”

“You wouldn't if you saw her father,” said Jim.

“I rather think I have. I think I met him once on business. Let me see—Josiah Jobling was Mayor of Wiggleton, rather common and very conceited. If I remember right, I thought him a pompous old ass.”

“That's the man,” said Jim.

“But I don't understand why you should be so down on him although you do belong to an old county family; the day's gone by for that kind of thing. I shouldn't be in the least surprised to see Miss Jobling married to a lord, to an impecunious earl, perhaps. Her father must be worth a pot of money.”

“He is. He stinks of it. They call him ‘Stink o' Brass’ in Tattlefold.”

“No doubt, no doubt; but Tattlefold isn't the hub of the universe. Funny old place, a relic of the old world holding out for dear life against the invasion of manufacture and new ideas. Had its day, no doubt. A kind of Noah's Ark. Must be nearly water-logged by now.”

“Thank you for nothing. Now I know what you think. After all, it's only your view. I wonder you didn't go on to describe what the beasts in the Tattlefold Ark are like. Strange beasts, of course, including myself.”

“Don't lose your hair, Jim; you know I never wrap things up in talking to friends. As to Tattlefold, you know as well as I do that its day is over. There is no use shuttnig your eyes; for good or ill the old order has passed and a new one has come.”

“You mean disorder.”

"No, I mean a new order. We have already begun to live in a new world, though most people don't realise it yet. A restless world, a world full of adventure, new discoveries, new ideas. I feel it in my blood; I believe it's going to be a fine world for those who have the pluck to face its music."

"Music!" Jim echoed. "Precious little music or art in this new world of manufacture."

"They will come, Jim. They are bound to come. In time. You may say what you like, the fact stares us in the face. The future of England rests with her manufacturing population, and I believe they may be trusted if the professional politicians will leave them alone."

"What do you mean by a professional politician, Roy?"

"One who baits mantraps with quarter truths."

"What's a quarter truth?"

"A lie coated with a little truth and enough self-interest to make it go down."

"You are speaking of agitators."

"Not altogether; many an agitator is perfectly sincere in his mis-statements; they generally come from ignorance due to a limited outlook."

"You should go into Parliament yourself, Roy."

"I should like to, but I haven't the time; like you, I'm up to the neck in the manufacture of machinery. After all, it's better than spouting or writing political paragraphs and headlines in newspapers for party purposes. When the new world is sufficiently educated it will learn to loathe such things. Mind you, I think an honest statesman is God's greatest gift to a nation."

"I am glad to hear you say that," said Jim; "but what about compromise? An honest statesman can't be bought or manufactured; you've got to take him as he is. What about compromise?"

"That's not quite a fair way of putting it, Jim. You know perfectly well that no man can conduct affairs of any kind without giving way on certain points. All the same, I don't withdraw what I said about an honest statesman."

In the evening Roy took Jim to his den to smoke, and the three ladies were left alone in the drawing-room. Flora remarked with annoyance, "I knew that would happen."

Aurora, willing to humour her, said, "If he cares for music he may come when he hears you playing. Play something he likes and we shall see if he will."

"Very well," replied Flora; "but I don't think he will come." She turned over some music, took up a book of studies by Stephen Heller, and began playing. The music suited her, charming music with little in it. Roy still failed to come, so Aurora asked her if she cared for the great classical composers, and Flora played the slow movement from the *Appassionata* Sonata. She played it, as Aurora expected, with too much feeling and an utter lack of the slow steady rhythm and statuesque restraint that the dignity of that movement demands.

Roy came into the room while Flora was playing it. When she finished he asked Aurora if she liked that kind of music, and on being answered "Yes," he continued, "Do you think my sister played it well?"

"Not so well as she played those studies by Heller, but I have often noticed that even great pianists play some composers better than others. Rubinstein, alone seems able to play every kind of music. When he is in the mood I think there is no one like him; he is the only one I ever heard play the *Appassionata* who carried me right through to the very end and left me utterly satisfied. Satisfied is a poor word, but if you

love music you will know what I mean. Have you ever heard Rubinstein?"

"Yes," replied Roy, "I have. I once asked a leading German violinist, 'Whom do you think the greatest pianist, Liszt or Rubinstein?' He answered, 'That is not a fair question. We love Liszt; he has been a father to us; but Rubinstein is probably the greatest pianist there ever has been or ever will be.'"

"That is very interesting," said Aurora. "When I was in Germany I was trying some pianos at one of the great music warehouses, and in talking with the owner I began praising Rubinstein. He said to me, 'My young lady, you think you do know Rubinstein, but I will tell you somethings. He is a great friend of mine and of my wife also. My wife, she was formerly a great pianist, but now she has become my wife she no longer plays in public but only for charity. When we were travelling with Rubinstein in Austria we said to him, there are somethings we would like to hear that we have not yet heard, we should like to hear these things.—'Very well,' he said, 'You shall hear them, choose what music you like, but it must be something I can play with credit. The programme of my next concert is fixed, but I will play these things after that.' It was ten days after that he did play them. In those ten days he did not look at any music or touch the piano except at the concert, yet he played all those pieces from memory. It was not well-known music; we did not know that he knew any of it. No, my friend, everything that is worth knowing for the piano is in his head.' He tapped his brow as he said that, and continued, 'You will remember that Hans Bülow did say, 'I touch no piano one day, I know it; two days, my friends know it; three days the public know it.' But Rubinstein!—Ach, that is another matter.'

"Of course," Aurora continued, "Rubinstein varies; I remember once hearing him play more like a demon than a lover of music. It was a very hot night, the great hall was full and overflowing; there were many thousands there, people were actually crowded round him on the platform and they began fanning themselves with their programmes while he was playing. He played furiously, taking some of the music terribly fast. It was a perfect nightmare, but very wonderful. Every now and then a beautiful passage, and then again the demon would seize him. And all the time, always the same grim expression on his strong face as he sat at the piano dominating that huge audience. He told a friend of mine, with whom he was staying, that his fingers were swollen with heat, that the keys of the piano were covered with perspiration, and that he felt the instrument was slipping away from him, while again and again he heard the horrible crackling of programmes round him. He said it was like being in hell. No artist could do himself justice under such conditions. Still, it was a wonderful experience and one I should have been very sorry to miss."

Flora, who had been an interested listener, remarked: "I never can understand how it is that you two, fond of music as you both are, will never sing or play when you are asked."

Aurora replied, "I was taught too much on professional lines in Germany. I think they drove some of the natural music out of me; only great artists are able to play long pieces of fine classical music perfectly and convincingly. Amateurs should be allowed to spend much of their time in practising and playing what they really like; they should not attempt too much, they should remember they cannot always find time to keep in practice."

"That's just what my brother says, and though I generally agree with him I am not prepared to admit that is a sufficient excuse. Won't you play or sing now?"

"I haven't practised for the last three years," said Aurora, "but I understand your brother sings, so perhaps we could try a duet and you might accompany us."

Flora produced a book of Mendelssohn's duets and they agreed to try one. Once started they found their voices harmonised, so they gave themselves up to the pleasure of singing together. They both sang well, but their voices were too loud for the room, and Mrs. Mackay was soon driven to seek refuge with Jim Thornton in Roy's snugery.

At last Flora wearied of playing the accompaniments; but Roy, who did not wish to stop, persuaded Aurora to play them, so they still sang on. When they did stop, instead of thanking her, Roy said; "You see what we have done, we have driven them out of the room. It's only fair to warn you that you will have to face my sister's disapproval. It's no use trying to propitiate her to-night; you will have to do so to-morrow when Jim Thornton and I are off for our day's tramp."

"What cowards men are!" Aurora said, but she laughed when she entered the snugery and saw how glum Flora looked. Nor did she improve matters by saying she had no idea it was so late.

Breakfast next morning was a rather silent meal. Mrs. Mackay, Roy and Aurora kept up a desultory conversation, but disappointment was written on Flora's face and it deepened into disapproval when she found Roy intended to take Jim Thornton for a whole day's tramp to see the gulls at Coney Island. She pointed out that there were more seabirds on

Puffin's Bill, which was only half the distance, so they could all go there together; that would be better for them than talking about machinery all day; but Roy was annoyed at her persistence, and told her they had decided to go to Coney Island and they meant to talk about machinery in any case.

When Roy and Jim had gone, Mrs. Mackay, who had noticed the altercation, sent the other two out for a walk, saying as she did so, "A brisk walk will do you both good. You needn't come back till lunch; you may be able to get as far as Puffin's Bill, since you are so anxious to go there."

After they set out, Flora remarked, "That's just like Roy. We might have gone with them as far as Puffin's Bill, but he didn't want us to go with them. I think it's very selfish of him." Being anxious to propitiate her Aurora said it was evident they wished to talk over business matters together; but Flora replied peevishly, "You think everyone wants to talk about business because they happen to do so in Tattleton. I think it is a great mistake for anyone, however busy, to allow the whole of his time to be taken up with business matters; it cramps the mind."

Aurora, still wishing to humour her, replied, "I quite agree with you, and I often regret that my father allows himself to become so absorbed in his own affairs that he thinks of little else. I am sure it isn't good for him, and I believe he will regret it some day."

"Then, he'll be different from most men that get obsessed like that. My brother says that men who allow all their time to be given up to business think of nothing else, and keep on going to their offices long after they are capable of doing any good there. He says they prevent younger men from assuming

responsibility, and when they can no longer crawl to their offices they die."

Aurora, who was a little annoyed at this sally, remarked, "I think you are rather hard on business men. You told your brother that the seagulls were only an excuse to get away from us to talk about machinery with James Thornton. I don't wonder at his being rather short with you."

"Well," said Flora, "if you hadn't taken up all last evening with those duets they might have had their talk then. I thought you were never going to stop."

"Why, Flora, it was you who wished us to sing. You found the Mendelssohn duets for us; surely you didn't expect your brother not to enjoy them? I admit I enjoyed them so much that I failed to notice the time. It is a long while since I met anyone I could sing duets with like that. You ought to be glad you were the means of providing us with that enjoyment. I think you get too absorbed in your brother."

"It isn't the first time you have said that," Flora replied. "You were always snubbing me at school when I talked about him. It is only natural that I should talk about him. There are only two of us."

"I know that," said Aurora; "yet I cannot think it good for either of you that you should be so wrapped up in him. It may not do him any harm, because he is occupied with other things and has a much wider life than you can possibly have. For you it is very different. If you marry, mind you don't spoil your husband; men are only too ready to expect their womenkind to subordinate their lives to them."

"You were always an upholder of Women's Rights," replied Flora.

Aurora smiled, and remarked, "My friend, Priscilla

Prickles, thinks me very lukewarm about it; she is always urging me to join their movement."

"Why don't you?"

"Because I haven't made up my mind about life in general yet. My home is a very different one from yours. I find it a very distracting one; I don't seem able to settle down to anything. My father is always urging me to marry well; I detest the idea, and yet I am afraid he may drive me into marrying some one I don't really care for, or possibly I may end as a wealthy old maid and occupy myself with pussycats and subscription lists. It may be that Priscilla is right, and women will be able to obtain a wider life of their own before long."

Further conversation was prevented by their arriving at the edge of the common overlooking the cliffs of Puffin's Bill. The morning was bright and clear, with a fair wind blowing from the south, and the white-winged gulls were rising and falling with occasional beatings of their wings or circling down to the sea beneath. After enjoying the sight for some time, Aurora turned to her friend, and said, "Wouldn't it be glorious to be as free as they are?"

The young men also enjoyed their walk. The business which Jim had come about concerned the Engineering works in Tattleton. The proprietor, Mr. Greenwood, was getting old, and, having no one to succeed him, was anxious to bring others into the business. He was proud of the works, which he had created, and he was attached to his workpeople. He trusted Jim, and had heard good reports of Roy Mackay; so he was considering the advisability of taking them into the concern as co-directors and partners.

Next day, being Sunday, they all went to the village church. Flora was organist, and the choir was a mixed

one. The service was simple, and the sermon, as Roy remarked afterwards, was one that could do nobody any harm and might comfort the old ladies; a remark that drew a strong note of disapproval from his mother.

In the afternoon Flora went to teach in the Sunday School, and Mrs. Mackay retired to her room to rest. Roy left Jim in his snuggerly with some engineering books and plans while he and Aurora looked through the music for duets suitable for the day; for his mother was a strict Sabbatarian. They began by singing the prophet's duet with the widow from "Elijah"; after that they entered bravely into the great duet between Adam and Eve from the "Creation." Not content with their first attempt, they sang it again and yet a third time with great gusto. Their voices were so loud that they roused Mrs. Mackay from her afternoon sleep.

As Jim said to Roy afterwards, "I never heard such a row, the words rang through the house—'Graceful consort.' 'Spouse ador-ed.' 'With thee is bliss,' &c., &c. If I had roused the house up like that when I was a boy my father would have spanked me, and quite right too. You might at least have shut the door. Even your old dog sat up and yowled."

Roy and Jim left on Monday morning. During the following days Mrs. Mackay told Aurora many things about her wanderings abroad. She was a cultured observer, but what captivated her guest most was the devotion to her husband which ran through her descriptions. Aurora felt that she was listening to a story of the past, a story full of fragrance like lavender, but out of key with life as she knew it, out of key with her own home, out of key with the life she had been in touch with when working at the hospital, out of key with the Chimneys of Tattleton and all they

stood for, out of key also with women's aspirations for a fuller life. She said something of the kind to Mrs. Mackay, who admitted that changes were taking place in the country.

"But," she said, "I am too old now to change. It may be that I attach too much importance to a woman's influence in the home. Still, I read the papers, and my son tells me about the wonderful expansion in the world of manufacture. He sees much; he goes to Germany on business; he is most enthusiastic about the great progress that is being made—and yet—I can't help thinking it is all material progress; and I ask, 'Is there any spiritual gain?'—only to be answered, 'Man-kind will be set free from manual labour; all will be done by machinery; there will be more time for education, thought and recreation.' It seems to me nothing but a whirl of uncertainty and change in which the great power of womanhood will be lost."

"What is the great power of womanhood?" Aurora asked, and was answered: "The Power of Love."

"But," Aurora objected, "there are so many different kinds of love, and of each kind so many different degrees. Such a life as yours, for instance, is at least unusual."

"Perhaps so," Mrs. Mackay admitted; "but, as you say, there are many degrees of love, and you can't deny that English home life is generally happy in that respect."

Aurora felt a wave of antagonism come over her. "Such cases as yours must surely be rare," she remarked. "You were both absolutely devoted to one another from the very first. You had no doubts, no questionings, hardly even room for growth."

Mrs. Mackay felt the opposition, but, knowing something of her guest's home life, she felt deep sympathy

for her, and replied quite simply, "Yes, it is quite true. I was more fortunate than most people are, more fortunate by far than I deserved to be, yet I cannot agree with you that there was no room for growth. It may be that since my husband's death I have led too retired a life, but that is my own fault and not the result of our devotion to one another. Whatever my fault may have been, I still believe that the widest love of all is but the natural outcome of individual love.

"When I was in Venice last I heard the Patriarch preach in St. Mark's on Good Friday. The church was full of people, and tourists were moving about with little consideration for the day or for those who were celebrating it. I was seated near the great pulpit, and was growing weary of the intoning, when the Patriarch entered the pulpit followed by several other prelates, who seated themselves while he came forward to preach. I wondered if he would find voice to speak to so great a gathering, but to my surprise I heard a most beautifully resonant voice and a most perfect articulation, each consonant clear and incisive, each vowel full and rich; and the sermon was equal to the voice, it was a very simple one.

"He began by saying: 'You know why we are gathered here to-day. We are here to celebrate the death of Jesus Christ. In order to give you some idea what that meant for the world I will put it in the form of a simple allegory. The Son of God looked down on the world, and was so distressed to see the evil there that He turned to His Father and said, "Do you see what evil is being done in the world?" And the Father said, "Yes, my Son, I see it." And the Son said, "Can nothing be done?" And the Father replied, "No, my Son, nothing can be done." And the Son said yet again, "Is there nothing?—Nothing at all that we can

do to save the world?" And the Father replied, "There is only one thing that can be done; but it is too dreadful even to think of that. It can only be saved by your giving up your life on the cross."'

"Then the Patriarch went on to say how the world was still full of evil; and, after drawing a vivid picture of those evils, he concluded: 'Only one thing can save the world to-day and that is the Spirit of Love and Self-Sacrifice, which is the Spirit of Jesus Christ.' I felt it was a sermon that might have been given in any place of worship. I said so to my husband, who was with me, and I remember his answer, 'I think it is to the women of the world that we must look if the Spirit of Love and Self-Sacrifice is to be understood. The home is the only fitting cradle of love, and woman's place is in the home.'"

"But surely," said Aurora, "you would not limit women to a home life, or demand from them a greater sacrifice of self than you would from the men?"

"Not altogether," replied Mrs. Mackay.

"I am afraid," Aurora said, "that we shall never think alike on this question. I agree that the Spirit of Self-Sacrifice is necessary for the welfare, perhaps even for the very existence, of the world, but men must bear their share in that sacrifice as well as the women. I agree about the spirit, but I dislike the forms by which the ecclesiastics have bound that spirit. No sane woman should be expected to swear that she will love, honour, and obey her husband until death. It's ridiculous."

"Well, my dear, I am not good at arguing, I am glad at least that we agree about the Spirit of Love and Self-Sacrifice."

Towards the end of the week Aurora received an urgent telegram from her father calling her home because her mother was ill.

CHAPTER XV

AT THE "ARCHANGEL"

GUY HETHERIDGE duly kept his Saturday evening tryst with Silas at the "Archangel." When he entered the inn he was received by the landlord, Matt Spiggot, who took him to the large parlour at the back where Silas and his friends were already assembled. This parlour might be termed the intellectual centre and club of the non-teetotal section of the village elders. It was a spacious room; the ceiling was supported by dark oak beams, and the greyish-white walls beneath were panelled with fixed benches attached. A great fireplace opened wide on one side, and there were several chairs in front of the fire, with little tables and highly polished brass spittoons conveniently placed on the whitened stone floor. A tall eight-day clock and a big oak cupboard stood at one end of the room; bright pewter vessels, a crude oil painting of the church, some coloured prints of race meetings and a stuffed owl, completed the attractions.

When Matt Spiggot brought Hetheridge in Silas rose from his chair near the fire and welcomed him. "We be reet fain to see thee," he said, "bean't we, lads?"

This was greeted with a ready chorus, "Aye, aye, we be thot."

Silas continued, "We tak' it reel kind o' yo to coom. I needn't interjuice yo to Sim Shivershins, since yo've

got 'im deawn in yore picter-book aw drawed eawt a showing him as th' Devil quite natteral like, an' I mun say as yo've not made 'im a good-looking devil; cos why, he never wur good-looking an' never will be neither."

"'Ear, 'ear" from the company, and a shout of admonition from Sim Shivershins, "Neaw, doan yo fellers be too ready with your 'ear, 'ears; yore time 'll coom next."

"Neaw, Sim, am I interjuicing Master Hetheridge to the company, or are yo? I'd like to kneaw thot."

A voice, "Howd thee noise, Sim, and leave Si to do th' interjuicing."

Thus admonished, Sim left Silas unanswered. The next to be "interjuiced" was John Skinner whom Guy had not met before. Silas dealt with him accordingly. "Him next me 'ere be John Skinner. I doan think as yo kneaws 'im. Leastways, I doubt yo 'aven't got 'im deawn in yore picter book. I reckon yo could mak' a better watter-spout eawt o' him than yo did of me. For why? 'Tis said as he puts watter intil milk as he sells to th' owd women in Tattlefowt."

"Neaw, neaw, Si. Th' owd women in Tattlefowt doan like watter in their milk any more than yo do in yore beer. Th' mon ain't alive yet as ud try thot game on wi' the likes of um. Not likely."

"Neaw, John, doan yo go for to interrupt my argyment or we'll never get a taste o' beer this evening. Neaw, maister, thot little feller theer be called th' Weasel. For why? He be allus ferriting eawt summat or other an' can never let sleeping dogs alone, he can't. Theer be some as calls 'im Th' Cammylion, a reptile as yo've seen in th' Zoologic Garden as changes colour and' as a long tongue to fill its bally wi' flies. But that be 'is political epitaph, an' we mun 'ave no politics 'ere to-night."

"Nor reptiles neither," interjected the Weasel. "Silas doesn't know a reptile when he sees one, through not being properly eddicated in zoology."

"Weel," said Silas, "that's as it may be; but we ain't got time for no scientific argyment neaw. Th' long black chap on t'other side, as is mostly legs wi' no bally atop of um—thot theer, si'thee—he be known as Jimmy Longstern, cos once when he wur a gradely cricketer he wur the subjec' of a painful incident as pappers say."

"Neaw, neaw, Si; mind thy manners an' doan go telling no lies abeawt me."

"Lies be dommed. I ain't tellin' no lies neaw, not likely; I keep lies for special occasions, I does. I'll tell aw th' truth abeawt thee later on, arter we've 'ad a sup o' beer. I will thot."

"'Ear, 'ear. Go thy ways, Si. Doan yo mind 'im, we be gettin' dry."

To make a long story short, Guy was introduced all round. Then beer was ordered, and they settled down for the evening. Silas, who had his eye on Guy's sketch book, said, "I see as yo've brought yore book o' picters wi yo; an' neaw, so long as yo've no objections to our seeing them, yo mowt show them to a two or three of us at a time; an' arter we 'ave aw seed yore drawin's yo con talk wi' us or yo con mak' drawings o' us, just as, yo've a mind to."

Guy agreed to this with a ready smile, and Silas said to the others, "Thot'll suit us aw, I reckon." This was met with a chorus of "Aye, ayes," and a voice—the Weasel's—"We wants to see th' Devil, an' th' Goblin an' th' Watter-spout."

Guy handed his sketch book to Silas who took possession of it and sat down between John Skinner and Jimmy Longstern, with Sim Shivershins looking

on behind. Jimmy, who was greatly taken with the drawing of Silas as a goblin sitting cross-legged on a tombstone, remarked, "I reckon thot's how it'll be in th' churchyard when Resurrection cooms reawnt. Si will have to be up betimes before the rest of us begin to rise, so as he can keep count on us. He'll have to see as aw as he's berrit cooms oop reet an' none be missin'! I reckon some o' th' ghostisis 'll find it noan to easy to get oop; he's made some o' th' graves full narrow, I doubt. Si will be responsible to Passon, an' Passon'll wait in th' church an' sort eawt sheep from goats as far as he con, to save time oop above, else they'll be fair thrutched oop when they get theer. I reckon Passon'll catch it as well as Si, if any of um be missing."

The sketch representing Sim as a devil clinging to the sides of the chancel arch met with great approval, which Si voiced suitably. "Ow! Sim; he's made a gradely devil of thee, he has thot. I kneawed well enough that it wur in thee, an' so did thy wife, I reckon. Yo made good money deawn pit an' spent it mostly at 'Pot and Kettle,' yo did thot. Matt Spiggot ud 'ave noan of thy carryings on 'ere. Yore wife ud a been fain to see thot drawing of thee, she wud thot. 'Ave yo chaps 'eard as he's been an' tow'd Susannah as he'd a been a tay-totaller if his wife 'adn't druv 'im inter th' pub?"

Chorus of "Neaw, neaw, Si," and a voice, "Yo con't expect us to agree to thot."

Si turned to John Skinner and said, "Yo 'eard abeawt thot reet enough?"

"Aye, aye, I 'eard abeawt it reet enuf. Skewgill 'ad been visiting 'im when he wur deawn with rheumatiz and told him to consider 'is latter end, an' thot druv 'im silly."

There was a chorus of laughter, and a retort from Sim, "Wait a bit, chaps, till yo see th' picter of Silas as a watter-spout."

When everyone had seen the sketches and they had been fully commented on, Silas was asked for the story about Jimmy Longstern. He began by saying it was a tender subject at the time, but as Jimmy had no ill-feelings about it now he would tell them the story.

"Yo see, it wur this road. When Jimmy wur working down pit nigh Wiggin he joined the Hot Coppers Cricket Club. Weel, one Saturday arternoon th' Hot Coppers wur playing agin th' Glowwums, an' it wur th' match o' th' season. Glowwums 'ad a terrible fast bowler as most o' th' Hot Coppers wur feart on. It wur a gradely match, an' theer wur a lot o' money on it; yo knows, in corse, as a good umpire means a lot for 'is side, specially when he's got money on it 'issel. Weel, Glowwums 'ad been in an' made fifty aw eawt, an' then Hot Coppers cooms in an' fast bowler rattles most of um eawt for next to nothing.

"Howsomedevour, Jimmy 'ere went in fust an' th' fast bowler could do nowt wi' 'im. Jimmy kep' 'is bat in blockhole an' held it theer tight till he seed ball coomin'. If ball riz up he'd lift bat oop an' howd it fast, an' so he kep' bat going oop an' deawn like th' piston o' a steam engine, an' fast bowler could do nowt wi' him. Now an' again a ball ud leet on th' 'edge o' the bat an' go to th' boundary, but wickets kep' falling till theer wur eight of th' Hot Coppers eawt for forty-six. Then fast bowler let loose a terrible fast ball, full-pitch reet above th' bails, and when Jimmy see'd it coomin' he turnt reawnt to get eawt o' th' road an' ball leet right onter 'is backside; they said as you could 'ear 'im skrike half a mile off. Bowler ses 'How's thot?' an' Weasel ses sharp enough, 'Leg afore wicket.' An' stumper chucks

ball oop in th' air. But when Billy 'ears Weasel say thot he forgets aw about his starn an' runs across th' pitch an' gives Weasel a terrible smack on 'is starn wi' bat. They sed it sounded as if a gun 'ad gone off. Bat broke in Jimmy's hond so it mun a been a proper smack, an no mistake. Weasel screamed like a shot rabbit.

"'Neaw,' ses Jimmy, wi' th' hondle o' th' bat in his hond, 'aw as I wants to know is, How's thot?' 'Not eawt,' screams th' Weasel as th' hondle o' th' bat catches 'im on th' sore spot. 'Weel,' ses Jimmy, 'thot's aw reet; neaw yo con tak' this hondle, an' I'll tak' yore bat an' finish my innings.' An' he did so to th' tune o' thirty-five, an' carried out his bat, an' won th' match for um. Leastways, I oughter to 'ave sed as he carried eawt Weasel's bat. Weasel lost his money, an' neither of um could set deawn easy for next fortnet. An' thot's why Jimmy's called Longstern; for, as he pointed eawt, th' ball wur four foot above ground when it leet on 'im, an' it ud a gone a good foot or more above wicket if it 'adn't leet on his starn. An' now yo know why Jimmy theer is called Longstern."

All Jimmy said to this was, "Weel, Si, I never 'eard yo tell th' story better; but it wur longer till usual, an' I'm fair dry wi' listening to it."

There was a general laugh at Silas's expense, and the Weasel remarked, "Serves thee reet, Silas; I reckon yo mun stand us both a pint." But John Skinner intervened, "Nay my lads, this be my reckoning; it wur Si as brought th' young measter here wi' 'is sketch-book."

Jimmy took his pint down in one draught, smacked his lips, shook his head slowly and asked him in a doleful voice, "Didst ever 'ear tell o' Jack th' Snipper as wur th' tailor at Gooseberry Hill?"

"Aye, I have thot; but yo con tell th' tale yoursel'. I reckon theer's some here as hasn't heard it."

"Weel, yo see, it wur this road. Jack th' Snipper had a promiscuous kind of family; some of um 'ad short legs like he had, others had mighty long legs, an' curious part was as aw of um as 'ad long legs died afore him. Neaw, Jack being a tailor wur mighty particular abeawt measurements, so he kept length of their carpses i' th' Family Bible, an' wrote an extry set o' suitable Bible names aside um arterwards. Fust as died wur abeawt four foot long; she wur little more till a babby but 'ad mighty long legs, so he writes Cubits beside 'er, cos 'er legs wur nigh two cubits long. Next as died wur six-foot-three, an' theer wur a doubt as to th' grave being big enough to howd him, so he sets him down as Tummus, being doubtful abeawt 'im. Next as cooms along wur nigh seven foot long; an' Jack wur in two minds about him as to whether he'd get a new grave or have th' owd one lengthened.

"In th' eend they found as they could lengthen th' grave without upsettin' other fowk's carpses, so they lengthened th' grave; but Jack couldn't find a suitable name for 'im so easy. At fust he thowt o' callin' 'im Jacob th' supplanter, as they 'ad to shift the other carpses to get 'im in. Then he got his mind set on Goliath; but Passon sed as Goliath wur six cubits an' a span long, an' taking cubit as eighteen inches, which was oncertain, but the least as Passon ud give in to, thot made Goliath ten foot high. So Passon suggested Ishbibenob, as he wur one of th' same family but as his length wurn't set down, 'appen he wur shorter till Goliath. In th' eend Jack tak's Passon's advice and sets 'im down as Ishbibenob in th' Book.

"Next as coom along wur nigh eight foot long; an' Jack ses to 'imself, 'By goom, this be a facer; he won't go inter th' grave, an' I con't get grave made longer on account o' disturbin' th' neighbours. Onyhow, I'll

set 'im deawn in Book as Goliath, whatever Passon ses abeawt length o' him.' Weel, he wur reet down worried abeawt grave; yo see, he'd a mind to keep family together against Resurrection. Weel, as he couldn't get Goliath in nohow, without trapessing on other people's graves, an' churchyard wur nigh full an' only a narrer strip left as wurn't suitable for Goliath, he made oop his mind to put 'im i' th' ground temporary like agin th' wall till next spring, when a new piece wur to be added to th' yard, an' then he'd 'ave a double-sized grave to howd aw th' lot of um 'gainst Resurrection.

"Weel, Jack wurn't quite easy in his mind abeawt it, an' he'd coom neaw an' agin to see if Goliath wur stirring any, as weather wur hot. One neet he wur a bit late in cooming home from th' pub, an' when he looked inter th' yard he sees as someone 'ad raised Goliath eawt o' th' ground; an' theer a-sittin' on coffin wur a ghost no more till four foot long! Jack wur so oopset that he sheawted out. 'Goliath! Whatever's th' matter wi' yo? Yo ain't gotten a ghost no more till four foot long.' Ghost paid not a mite of attention to him, but started drummin' on coffin wi' its heels an' ses in a squeaky voice; 'Dost 'ear, Goliath? Feyther's talking to thee.'

"Then a big rumbling voice coom eawt o' th' coffin, 'Aye, I hear 'im reet enough, but just yo leave off drummin', I con't hear mysel' speak. Best thing as he con do is to put me back again i' th' ground abeawt a foot deeper an' bide till next spring, when he con get a gradely grave made for aw th' lot of us in th' new ground over theer. Theer's a spade in th' shed theer. I reckon another foot'll do the job, an' then he needn't bother his yed anymore abeawt me; another foot an' I'll keep reet enough till next spring, I will thot sartin sure.'

"Weel, Jack got spade same as he wur towd—or thowt he did—an' he put Goliath back again a foot deeper. Anyhow, Jack had no more trouble arter thot, an' he got um aw set comfortable together in th' new grave next spring."

Silas remarked, "Thy tale be as long drawed eawt as thy legs, an' I mun say as yo mowt 'ave stopped at seven foot. I call eight foot dommed unartistic. What dost say, Master Artist? Yo'll back me oop, I reckon."

Hetheridge avoided answering by asking Silas if he had ever seen a ghost, and Silas replied, "It's quare as yo should arst me thot, for it wur only this last week as I berrit Shaddowy Tummas."

"Who was Shaddowy Tummas?"

"Shaddowy Tummas wur a mon as wur feart o' seein' his wife's ghost. 'Ast never 'eard tell o' him?"

"No. Never."

"Tell 'im th' tale, Si, an' a done wi' it," said Sim.

"Weel, I doan see why I shouldn't, it's a respectable tale. It wur this road. When Tummas's missus wur alive hoo nagged 'im welly to de-ath, an' arter he'd berrit 'er he wur deawnreet glad at fust, but arter a bit he began to miss her. He wur a decent chap, wur Tummas, a real steady mon an' nigh to being a tay-totaller an' aw, but he wur used to being nagged an' 'ad mostly coom to like it—it wur a kind of relax-at-i-on for 'im, thee kneaws. Weel, he got missing 'er more till more, an' he gets as thin as a lat an' as green as a leek; so chaps at th' 'Pot an' Kettle' persuaded 'im to coom an' 'ave a drink wi' um.

"At fust it did seem to cheer 'im oop; arterwards drink seemed to go th' wrong road, an' he thowt as he saw his wife at times threatening him, an' he got aw bent like a hoop, an' he'd go abeawt wi' his honds shaking like th' leaves o' a poplar, an' aw th' time he

wur as thin as a lat an' as green as a leek. In th' eend he went to a wise woman an' she tow'd 'im as his wife mun 'ave cast a spell on 'im, so he mun throw salt over his shoulder on to 'er grave at midnight an' see what mowt 'appen. Weel, he did thot, but aw th' same nowt did 'appen, an' he wur still as thin as a lat an' as green as a leek, an' aw twisted reawnt like a hoop.

"Weel, one Saturday neet, arter he'd been at 'Pot an' Kettle,' he turnt into his heawse feelin' uncommon queer, same as if summat wur hanging over 'is yed. Howsomedevour, he got inter 'is bed an' went off oneasylike inter a kind of a swoond, an' just as clock struck twelve he wur wakkened oop by someone scrattin' on th' pane of the window, an' then a voice coom from eawtside, 'Let me in, Tummas. Let me in an' I'll set thee reet, I will thot. I've 'ad no peace at aw since yo cast salt on th' grave. Let me in, Tummas, let me in an' I'll cure thee.'

"Tummas kneawed as it wur his wife's voice, an' he broke eawt aw of a muck of a sweat, an' th' sound of the scrattin' an' his wife's voice geet louder and louder till he could abide it no longer. So he lep eawt o' bed an' ses, 'Winder be fast, just yo stay theer while I get summat to open it!' Then he starts off an' locks front-door an' bolts back-door, an' sets a big black box agin it. Then he gets back to bed, an' th' scrattin' an' th' voice coom terrible loud; but Tummas thowt as he'd made aw fast till mornin', an' when leet came ghost ud 'ave to go, so he ses, 'Neaw, Bess'—that wur th' name o' his missus as was—'just howd thee noise, an' doan go for to scratt aw th' paint off th' winder. Best ha' done an' go neaw; I'll not let thee in this time o' neet. Not likely. 'Ow do I know as devil beant behind thee an' he'll coom in too, then wur wud I be? Nay, nay, thee mun go neaw, theer's a good lass.'

"But th' voice coom clear as if it wur in th' room, 'Tummas, thou art as thin as a lat an' as green as a leek. To-morrer yo'll be a corpse if I doan coom to thee now. Thee mun let me in, Tummas, thee mun let me in.' But Tummas said, 'No, Bess, I'll not let thee in. I'd sooner be a corpse than see a ghost, I wud thot; so go thee ways, I'll not let thee in.'

"Then Tummas heard a voice say in an awesome whisper, like a terrible east wind crackling among trees wi' frost in um: 'He's lockit front door an' he's barred oop back door, so we mun leave him. He don't want to be cured, not he.' But thot didn't suit Bess. Tummas 'eard her say, 'Nay, nay, Moses; we mun try chimbly fust. Arter aw yore sperience yo've no call to be feart o' a sup o' fire an' smoke, an' I reckon kitchen fire'll be eawt by now.' 'May be,' ses Moses 'but I'll try bedroom chimbly fust. It be a bit on th' small side, but it be coud an' theer baint so much soot in it neither. Yo ain't got no beard so yo can scrattle deawn kitchen chimbly if yo've a moind to. I reckon I'll try this un.'

"Afore Tummas 'ad time to stop chimbly oop wi' th' bed-clothes deawn coom Moses on flure in a scutter o' soot, an' Tummas's wife arter 'im. When they'd got oop off floor an' sorted themselves Moses jumps on th' eend o' th' bed an' sits glaring at Tummas. Arter inspectin' 'im for a minute or so, he ses; 'Aye, aye. Yo tow'd me no more till th' truth. Tummas be as thin as a lat an' as green as a leek, an' aw of a tremble an' bent nigh double. I doubt it'll be mornin' afore we geet 'im straightened eawt.' Then he ses to Tummas, 'Yo've made a nice mess of it, yo 'ave thot. There's only one road neaw, yo mun swallow aw th' commandments; if yo can keep um aw, I reckon thot'll straighten yo eawt.'

“Wi thot Moses whips a red-hot un eawt of his pocket an’ jerts it aw sizzeling deawn Tummas’s throat—pain o’ it wur terrible, yo understand. As soon as Tummas give over choking, Moses jerts another an’ then another until Tummas wur nowt but a gibbering volcaner, an’ then summat wus than aw coom along. Moses turnt ’imself into a long white-hot bulrush an’ jerted ’isself deawn arter ’is commandments. Tummas said to ’issel’, ‘Weel, this be th’ eend; I reckon he’s made a carpse o’ me!’ An’ he goes off into a de-adly swoond. When he coomed to his senses agin he ’eard his wife say to Moses, ‘Yo’ve been an’ gone an’ done it this time; yo’d better coom oop again sharp or yo’ll be the de-ath of him.’

“‘Neaw, neaw,’ ses Moses, ‘yo just let me bide a bit an’ it’ll be aw reet; things is goin’ on weel inside o’ him, an’ I ain’t done yet. He’s a tough nut, he is.’

“‘Yo mun coom oop,’ ses Bess. ‘I doan want yo to mak’ a carpse o’ ’im yet; it’ll not suit me to have ’im messin’ reawnt me as he’d used to, an’ ’im as thin as a lat, an’ as green as a leek, an’ bent like a hoop. Not likely; I’ll fot doctor to him sooner till thot.’ An’ off hoo went for th’ doctor.

“Doctor wur a little fat man, an’ he wur aw eawt o’ his wint when he coom; but he looked at Tummas an’ he sed, ‘I’m feart he’s in a bad way; he be thin as a lat, an’ as green as a leek, an’ aw bent like a hoop, just as yo tow’d me.’ Then he looked at his pulse, felt his tongue an’ put his fingers down his throat. ‘By goom,’ he ses, ‘his tongue be terrible hot an’ his throat be aw burnt to a cinder.’ ‘Aye,’ ses Bess, ‘thot may well be, he’s been an’ swallered Moses an’ aw his commandments.’ ‘Weel,’ ses doctor, ‘we mun geet th’ owd stonemason oop agin, thot’s what we mun do wi’ th’ owd rascal. When I’ve done wi’ ’im

I'll write an account of 'im i' th' Medical Pappers, I will thot, but we mun get Moses eawt fust.' 'Will yo'? ses Moses, thinkin' as he wur safe inside o' Tummas. 'I will thot,' ses doctor, an' he teems a pail of watter deawn Tummas's throat.

"I doubt if Tummas 'ad sooped up so much watter since he took to going to th' pub. Theer wur a terrible explosion inside o' Tummas, an eawt coom Moses in a towering passion. He'd a cat o' tentails aw red-hot in his hond, an' at th' eend o' each o' th' tails wur a white-hot commandment. It wur a fear-some sight, an' little doctor found it summat worse. Moses chased 'im reawnt and reawnt, lamming inter 'im aw th' time wi' his cat o' tentails, an' screamin' terrible, 'Oo sed as I wur a stone-mason? Oo called me an owd rascal?' An' wi' a terrible swipe o' th' tentails he purred doctor reet through winder saying, 'Yo con put thot in Medical Pappers, an' yo've a mind to!'

"When Tummas's missus hears thot, she ses to Moses, 'Weel, Mo, a nice mess yo an' doctor 'ave made of it atween yo; Tummas be welly de-ad an' yo ain't done 'im a mite of good, I'm thinkin'.' 'Neaw, neaw, Bess; just yo 'ave a bit o' patience. Wimmin's ghost-esis be too previous; yo be worse till Pharaoh. Tummas be turnin' white already, an' neaw as I've got 'im aw reet inside I'll straighten 'im eawt in no time, if yo'll just let weel alone. Neaw, yo tak' holt on his feet, an' I'll tak' holt on his shoulders, an' when I ses 'off' just yo lean back sudden an' poo as 'ard as yo con.'—'Off'!—Tummas said jert wur a terrible one, an' summat went crack.

"'Summat's shifted,' ses Moses, 'but he ain't any-ways straight yet, so we mun do it again. Neaw. Off!—Bang!—'Thot's better, summat's give way inside o' 'im an' no mistak', but we mun give 'im

one more. Neaw, put yore back in it this time, an' we'll give 'im a gradely one. If thot doan straighten 'im eawt I doan know of owt else as will. Neaw, Bess—Off!—Smash!—'Thot's done th' job,' ses Moses, 'he's straight enough neaw, I reckon.' 'Aye,' ses Tummas's missus, 'thot's done it reet enough, but he seems kind o' dazed, an' I'd like to see him a better colour; he be de-adly white.' 'Aye,' ses Moses, 'an' yo'd be de-adly white if yo had gone through 'arf what he's 'ad to. Aw as he wants is a tonic, I reckon. I'd better give 'im one afore I go lest that fool doctor goes a tampering wi' 'is inside.' So Moses whips a Pharaoh Sarpint eawt o' his pocket an' pops it inter Tummas's mouth. 'See, he's turning pink aw reet; will thot suit yo?' 'Aye,' said Tummas's missus, 'an' then cock crew eawtside an' they both flew oop chimbly in a terrible scutteration.

"In th' mornin' neighbour coom reawnt to see what Tummas 'ad been doing to make such a rumpus aw neet. He said as he found 'im still 'arf silly wi' drink, an' winder broke in, an' bedclothes were partly thrut oop chimbly, an' watter an' soot aw over th' flure. He said as he'd never seen such a mess since he wur born. Aw th' same, Tummas wur straightened eawt an' wur pink aw over. What dost think o' thot, master artist?"

"I think it must have taken you a long time to make it all up."

"Not he," said Sim Shivershins. "He doan mak' it oop. It aw cooms to 'im natteral like when he's deawn i' th' graves casting the soil oop. We reckon he be biggest leear in an' out Tattlefowt, an' thot's saying summat. Thot wur one of his respectable stories. Aw th' same, he'd a put a lot more spunk in it if yo 'adn't been 'ere, an' it being Saturday neet an' aw. Yo see, sir, Sunday be coomin' an' he's got

to stond by Passon. He 'as to get inter reet state o' mind for th' Sunday, yo understond. Some time yo mun get 'im to tell yo one of 'is weekday stories, one of his 'ot uns, an' then yo'll kneaw what I means by respectable, you will thot."

"I dun know," objected the Weasel, "what yo call respectable; for my part, I think that an irreligious story."

Silas turned on the Weasel in great indignation. "Irreligious! Yo call it irreligious! I wur brought oop on th' Bible afore you were born or thowt of. They tales in th' Owd Testamint be th' finest as I've ever 'eard tell on; they've a sight more human natter in um than any others, they have thot, an' no mistak'."

"Yo should keep the Bible out of the Public House," the Weasel rejoined tartly.

"Aye, yo wud!" said Silas witheringly. "Yo wud; an' what's more, yo'd keep it eawt o' yore day's wark. We aw know as yo stop wark as soon as th' manager's back's turnt. Theer be some as buys a big Bible an' puts it on th' table for aw to see, but they never looks intil it one week's end to another. I doan see why Bible stories should be kept eawt o' th' pub. Not when it's a respectable pub like th' 'Archangel' 'ere. Aw th' men singers coom 'ere arter a practice i' th' church an' Passon doan mind, for why should he? I wur brought oop on beer an' Bible an' I'm not ashamed o' neither. We aw kneaws as yo mak' clean th' eawtside o' th' cup an' th' platter, 'cos why? Yore missus 'ud comb yore 'air for yo if yo didn't."

This was greeted with a general laugh, for everyone knew that the Weasel had to knuckle under to his wife. Shortly afterwards, with many expressions of good will from the company, Guy bade them all good-night as it was getting late.

CHAPTER XVI

DIFFICULT TIMES

THE message calling Aurora back was so brief and so unexpected that she was filled with anxiety as to what it might conceal. It left her with an intense desire to reach home as soon as possible, so that she might learn what had really happened. Her mother was perfectly well when she last saw her; now it was evident that she must be either seriously ill or the victim of some accident; nor could Aurora banish the fear of actual death from her mind.

While occupied by these distracting thoughts she was conscious of the quiet sympathy of Mrs. Mackay; still, it was a great relief when she found herself alone in the train with the fields flying past her, for now she was speeding on her way and would soon know all. As she thought of home she realised more than ever how much the family life centred round her mother, and she felt how unspeakably dreary Goldmark Hall would be without her.

It was evening when she drove up to the Hall. Her father met her at the door and welcomed her. He was glad to see her, though he was so restless and uneasy that she could gather little from him. He could think of nothing except that his wife was dangerously ill, yet such was his lack of self-control that he could do nothing to help her. He could not even keep still; and Dr. Oldbird had been obliged to

forbid his entering the sick room lest he should disturb her.

Aurora was relieved to find Dr. Oldbird there; his presence was an assurance that everything that was possible would be done. He told her briefly that her mother was suffering from inflammation of the lungs, and he expected the crisis would come some time during the next twenty-four hours. He had two nurses in attendance, both of whom Aurora knew. He did not wish her to take charge, but he wanted her to sit quietly by the bedside so as to give her mother confidence. He advised her to tidy herself up and get something to eat before going up to the sick room, and finished by saying, "You have had sufficient experience of nursing to know what a support quiet understanding and sympathy may do in such a case as this. You will find your mother conscious, but don't let her spend her strength in speaking; she knows she will need it all if she is to pull through. It will be an uphill fight, but she is determined to live if possible, and that may turn the scale; I can't say more now."

While Aurora was snatching a hasty meal Eggy came in to see her; though he was really concerned about his mother, he only showed his anxiety by grumbling at his father's fussiness. "If father hadn't been so set on mother's going to the town hall with him, before she was taken so ill," he complained, "she wouldn't have been half as bad as she is. Just like father."

Aurora said quietly, "Poor father! he's very much upset; we must do all we can to help him. Where has cousin Edith gone to?"

"Father packed her off at once. She's fond of mother, and let herself go. She told father it was

his fault that mother was so ill, and said he never considered anyone but himself."

Aurora was indignant. "What's the use of repeating such things?" she said. "You know it isn't true, and even if it were it was a mistake to say it. Father may be thoughtless and inconsiderate at times, especially when he is busy, but so are most people for the matter of that."

"When he's busy! Why he's always full of his own doings. When he's busy! What rot!"

"Now, Eggy, we've had enough of that; mother's ill and we must think of her." Then she left him, but before going up to her mother's room she went to see Grandpa. She found him in the library huddled up in front of the fire, apparently asleep. He started when he saw her and exclaimed, "Umph! I'm glad you're here." Then he went on in a hopeless broken way, "Oldbird and you, you're all she has to count on. Jobling's a fool and Eggy's a cur. Your mother will be glad to see you. Don't trouble about me. It doesn't matter about me. I'm nearly done. Oldbird's kind, but he can't deceive me. I lost one that way before. It's a bad job."

The tears started in Aurora's eyes as she stood by Grandpa and listened to him. When he had finished she kissed him; then she went up to the sick room and sat down by the bedside. At first her mother did not notice her, but after a while she turned her head and looked at her, smiled faintly, and whispered, "I'm so glad you have come, dear."

Aurora took the hand which lay on the quilt and, stroking it gently, replied, "I understand, mother. Now you must try to rest. I am going to sit beside you. Dr. Oldbird told me all about it. He wishes you to rest. Try to rest."

She went on talking in a low monotone, hardly conscious of what she was saying, but satisfied that her voice had a soothing effect. After a little her mother's attention wandered, and she became restless and oppressed.

Through the long weary night Aurora sat on, hardly daring to hope. She had been accustomed to attend to the sick and dying during her three years in hospital, but it was a very different thing to sit there watching her own mother struggling for breath; even the relief of ministering to her wants was denied her. Never before had she been so conscious of the slow, remorseless beat of time; nor had she ever realised the unceasing ebb and flow of life so vividly.

As she watched by the bedside she felt that the dark barrier which separates the living from the dead was actually falling. Her mother was drifting on the edge of life! Was it possible that she could already catch some glimpse of the everlasting realities that lie behind the veil of the present? Aurora had been greatly interested in such matters during the last three years, but now she was sitting there in the subdued light, watching her mother, much that she had read seemed utterly futile. It was a great relief when these small hours had passed during which vitality runs low. She was still more grateful for the morning light, and she welcomed Dr. Oldbird's entry into the room.

After he had satisfied himself that all was right and that nothing more could be done, he took Aurora away and insisted on her having some breakfast. Then they went back again, and she remained while he gave directions from time to time as the crisis of the illness drew near. When the change came, her mother's temperature fell so rapidly, and the collapse

which followed was so grave, that Dr. Oldbird felt obliged to send Aurora for her father.

What followed seemed like an endless nightmare with a grim sense of unreality added, for Aurora found it almost impossible to keep her father quiet or prevent him from moving about the room. At last she was obliged to take him away, and it was some time before she was able to leave him and return. When she did so, she found that her mother was more than holding her own, and there was some hope that she might pull through.

As the day passed the improvement continued, and by evening Dr. Oldbird thought the worst was over. Aurora still found it difficult to control her father; and at last, being thoroughly tired out, she said to him, "Oh, father! can't you see? Don't you understand how difficult you are making it for everyone? Can't you control yourself for mother's sake? Dr. Oldbird thinks she will live now, but if you go into her room when you are excited like this you will upset her. Dr. Oldbird is afraid of that. Mother's not out of danger yet. Do think of her and not of yourself."

"Think of her!" he repeated; and as he did so he looked so surprised and hurt that she hadn't the heart to say more. But when he continued, "Why, I'm thinking of her all the time," she ventured to say, "Are you quite sure, father?"

He looked at her helplessly for a moment, then sat down and burst into tears. Thoroughly surprised and shocked, she put her arm round him and said, "Don't, father! Oh don't! I'm tired, and didn't think what I was saying. I ought not to have said it."

Her father continued to look at her, and kept reiterating, "But you did say it—you did say it—and what's more, it's true!"

Nothing Aurora could say afterwards had any effect on him. What she had said, she had said, and it was true.

Next day Dr. Oldbird told Mr. Jobling that he thought his wife was out of danger, but he warned him that until the winter was over the greatest care must be exercised. He also suggested that it might be well for her to go south in the early spring for a thorough change. He told Aurora what he had said to her father and discussed plans with her. In the course of their conversation he remarked, "I don't understand the way in which this anxiety has affected him. Until the critical stage had passed he was excited and unreasonable; but when the worst was over, instead of being optimistic as I expected, he seemed to be depressed and to have lost interest in everything. He appears to have suffered some kind of shock. Can you throw any light on it?"

Aurora hesitated before replying; then she said, "I am afraid I can. Something I said to him in a thoughtless moment upset him."

"Indeed!" Then, after a little consideration the Doctor continued, "I am an old friend now and I am sure you will not think I am seeking to know more out of idle curiosity, nor do I wish you to say anything further to me unless you feel disposed to do so. Perhaps you would like to think it over; you are probably the best judge as to whether any useful purpose will be served by telling me more. I need not say that anything you do tell me will be treated as in absolute confidence."

Aurora was only too glad to have this opportunity of unburdening her mind. After hearing what she had to say, Dr. Oldbird remained for some time in deep thought; then he said, "I don't think you need

be anxious; your father is egotistical, but he is naturally active and optimistic and will continue to take a keen interest in whatever he happens to be doing. The only possible effect of the shock, for shock it is, would be to change his point of view. He might cease to take such an absorbing interest in his own affairs; such a change could not fail to be an advantage to all around him. Try and interest him in other things. I noticed that Mr. Hetheridge had given over coming to the house when your mother was taken ill. I think it would be well for him to resume his visits. I understand he has been in Italy; he might be able to interest your father in travelling. A visit to the south of France and Italy in the spring would do both your father and your mother good, and it would take him out of himself, or at least it would be a break for him. We must talk about this later on; in the meantime I think Hetheridge should come as before."

On leaving the Hall Dr. Oldbird met Miss Priscilla Prickles on the doorstep and, in answer to her inquiries, he assured her that his patient was making good progress. Then, with a twinkle in his eye, he added, "I am glad to see you here, I think you will do your friend good; she needs a little variety, though I hardly think the Women's Rights Movement is what I should prescribe. I don't suppose she is quite ready for that kind of tonic yet."

Priscilla told Aurora what the doctor had said, and was glad to see her smile; but, finding it difficult to divert her thoughts from the experiences of the past few days, she let her talk about them.

Aurora found her friend was unexpectedly sympathetic and gentle. She made some remark to that effect and Priscilla replied, "I'm a much older woman than you and it is many years since I passed through

a time of great trouble. Shortly after I lost my parents I fell deeply in love with a brilliant young fellow. The attraction was mutual, we were engaged to be married, the wedding day was even fixed. In the meantime we discovered we had so little in common that we agreed to break off the engagement. Unfortunately meddling friends were horrified, and he left me to encounter all their criticism. I was afraid you might make the same mistake and get engaged to some one whose interests you could not share; and, having done so, that you would go through with it and make the best of it, which after all could only be a second best."

"Most lives seem to be second bests," Aurora replied wearily and changed the subject.

Mr. Jobling's optimism reasserted itself as soon as his wife was out of danger. Hetheridge succeeded in interesting him in his Italian experiences, and all Mr. Jobling's spare time was now spent in reading up guide books and fussing his wife. He refused to read about art. He knew what he liked, and wasn't going to be told what to admire by Ruskin or anyone else; Aurora might read such books if she wanted to, but he had no time to waste that way; guide books were good enough for him, they saved time by marking what to look at with stars. After all, art was only a matter of taste.

The period of convalescence is generally a tedious one, and Mr. Jobling's well-meant intention of interesting his wife in guide books would have tired out most people. Fortunately, Mrs. Jobling had a placid disposition, and after many years' experience of his fussiness it had ceased to disturb her any more than the buzzing of a bumble-bee might disturb a giant sunflower. She simply answered "yes" and "no."

The information he imparted was negligible, but his anxiety lest she should catch a chill embarrassed her.

For a time she submitted to this, and was even pleased by his care for her, as it reminded her of the days of their courtship, but she was a large woman with a sanguine tendency, and she found his assiduous attention to the fire, to blankets and to eider-downs most trying. Even Aurora was unable to cope with this latest craze, and it was a relief to them all when Dr. Oldbird showed Mr. Jobling a letter from Lord Newpen, in which he expressed a wish to see Mr. Jobling and to obtain his advice on a scheme for providing courses of lectures in industrial centres.

Mr. Jobling was greatly pleased and flattered by this. He remembered Lord Newpen's hint as to the possibility of royalty's honouring an important educational function with its presence; and he did not forget his reference to the bestowal of a fitting decoration on any individual who would endow such a scheme with an ample munificence. He urged Dr. Oldbird to communicate his appreciation of Lord Newpen's suggestion, and his willingness to meet him. Sir Josiah Jobling of Goldmark Hall—or better still—*Lord Goldmark!*—Mr. Jobling had sufficient imagination to picture himself writing an important letter to *The Times* on Chimneys and signing it “Goldmark.” Yes, he would certainly meet Lord Newpen, but he would not commit himself in any way until he knew what the reward would be and how much it would cost.—Lord Goldmark—that would indeed be worth having—at a price!

Now that Mr. Jobling was fairly started in pursuit of this new hare his interest in Italy waned, and Mrs. Jobling was no longer oppressed with eider-downs.

Hetheridge also was left free to devote his time to the ballroom and to Aurora, while she continued to interest himself in the proposed tour. A visit to Italy had always been a dream of hers which seemed unlikely to be fulfilled. She had read Byron and Ruskin, and she had been thrilled by the account of Garibaldi's fight for freedom. Mrs. Mackay's description of her wanderings and Hetheridge's enthusiasm had also fired her imagination. During one of her conversations with Guy she admitted her lack of interest in the art of Italy. Seeing how disappointed he looked, she added, "You must remember how ignorant I am about it. I am afraid art has been left out of my composition." He answered her impatiently, "You always say that, but you like music. You can't deny that. You sing gloriously. You must know you do. Yet you seem to regard even your own singing with a certain amount of cold criticism."

"What if I do?" she said, "I enjoy it all the same."

"Enjoy!" Guy ejaculated. "All real artists feel intense emotion in the presence of what is beautiful, most people feel something of the kind. Don't you ever feel like that?"

"Sometimes," she replied—and as she did so she smiled. For a moment Guy was reminded of Leonardo's great portrait of Monna Lisa. Then the smile faded away, the lips tightened, and her face seemed to set like a mask as she added, "As a rule, I find it necessary to keep my feelings to myself."

"But surely," he objected, "you can never share the feelings of others if you never show yours. You only freeze other people up."

This time she looked at him as if searching for something, then she said, "I think women have more

intuition than men. They know by instinct what others are feeling. I know, for instance, that you have an absorbing love of your art, such as I could never share."

"How do you know that?—I don't see why you shouldn't share it," he protested.

"There are many reasons," she answered.

"What reasons?"

"Have you forgotten the Chimneys of Tattleton?" she questioned.

"I don't understand you at all," he replied impatiently. "I know, of course, that some of your stuffy rich people here look down upon an artist. You don't, but you shut yourself out of our world all the same."

"Do I?" She continued to look at him curiously.

After a little hesitation he replied, "Yes, you do. You know you do."

Aurora paused a little before answering, then she said very quietly, "I thought you understood. I am afraid I do shut myself out of other worlds because I was born in Tattleton and live at Goldmark Hall, I thought you knew that. I imagine there was both a little contempt and a little satire in your scheme for decorating this room."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean what I say. Take Noah, for instance."

"Damn Noah!" he exclaimed and blushed to the roots of his hair.

"Ah! I am glad of that. Now, at least, you feel exactly as I do about it. But—you are committed to Noah, just as I am to Goldmark Hall."

"I am not committed. Of course, I shan't go on with Noah, now I see you don't like it."

"There are many things I don't like," she said, "but I have to make the best of them. We shall have

to make the best of Noah, I am afraid. And, after all, that's only a part of the same thing; it's typical of Goldmark Hall. My father would be upset if what he had agreed to was altered. I wish now that I hadn't spoken out, but perhaps it's as well that you should understand. Even my singing, which I enjoy, was looked upon as an accomplishment that would prove valuable in the matrimonial market. There is no chain so heavy as a golden one. Now you know why I hate display and yet put up with it."

"But that's horrible," he cried.

"Oh no! It isn't. Nothing of the kind. I'm used to it, and I intend to make the best of it. Now let us try and forget this."

"How can I?"

"Whether you can or not," she replied, "there is nothing to be gained by our pursuing it. We are good friends, and it would be a pity to do anything that might interfere with our friendship. Don't be too drastic in your treatment of Noah." As she said this she smiled, but Guy flung his brush down impetuously and exclaimed, "I don't believe you care a hang about our friendship. You've spoilt my afternoon. I can't go on painting now after what you have said. We can't leave things like this."

Aurora looked concerned and suggested that, as she was going out for a walk, he should come with her. He agreed, and she went to get ready. While doing so she thought rapidly. For everyone's sake it seemed necessary that all should continue as before. With this in her mind she joined him; and, as they walked up the hill behind the house, she explained how necessary it was that, with her mother ill and her father in his present mood, the work in the ballroom should not be interrupted in any way.

On the top of the hill there was a round tower, with sham battlements and a circular stairway within leading to the top. It was known as Jobling's Castle. A common impulse led them to ascend it and look over the battlements. The afternoon was fine, but mist lay in the valley and the woods were almost hidden from sight. Shafts of light fell slanting over the slopes and lit up the edges of the mist cloud below, above this the tips of the chimneys appeared with their smoke rising against a darkening sky.

Aurora and Guy stood together looking silently on this scene. As they looked, the beauty of it affected them both, and she began to regret that she had proposed the walk. At last when their silence became embarrassing, Guy drew a long breath, and said, "I am glad we came here. It's very beautiful. Even the Chimneys of Tattleton are beautiful when seen in the right light."

"Yes," Aurora replied, "if one can only look at them in the right light; the difficulty is to do that." She was about to continue when she caught sight of her father hurrying up the hill; he was coming towards them. They agreed to wait until he came up. As he drew near it was evident that something had disturbed him. He stopped at the foot of the tower, breathless and excited. He did not even wait for them to descend but called out from below. "What possessed you both to come up here? I have been looking for you, Aurora. I wanted to tell you that I saw Lord Newpen to-day. He wishes to consult me about an important educational scheme. I have asked him to stay with us. He's coming to-morrow. I want you to see that everything is ready for him when he comes. I wish to show him every consideration." Then, without pausing, he said to Hetheridge, "You oughtn't to let my daughter waste your time like this."

Guy felt thoroughly annoyed, both at the interruption and at Mr. Jobling's rudeness; so he replied indignantly, "She's not wasting my time."

"Perhaps I ought to have said, my time," replied Mr. Jobling.

"I don't understand you, Mr. Jobling," Guy rejoined icily.

"Hoh, don't you?" returned Mr. Jobling. "I thought I was paying for your time."

Then Guy flashed out, "You are doing nothing of the sort," he said; "so far you haven't paid me a penny, and I am quite ready to throw up the work to-morrow. You can get someone else to do it. The arrangement was between you and the architect. I shall write to him to-night and ask him to relieve me of the work. I understand it is not daywork, but an arrangement that the whole is to be completed to his satisfaction. I have no doubt he will relieve me of it and you won't have a penny to pay for what I have done."

To say that Mr. Jobling was unprepared for this outburst would give but a faint idea of his surprise. He simply subsided like a pricked bubble; he looked helplessly at his daughter, but she remained silent. Poor Mr. Jobling! Even Hetheridge pitied him when he said to her, "It's all your fault. Why don't you help me?" It was so pitiable, and so transparent.

CHAPTER XVII

AN OFF DAY

LATE one evening after the episode on the tower Guy Hetheridge was sitting with James Thornton in the smoking room at Tattle Hall. It was a stormy night, the hail rattled on the windows and the wind roared in the wide chimney, while the old oak timbers creaked and groaned. Jim noticed that his friend was more silent than usual, but put it down to his artistic temperament, thinking it was either the wildness of the night or some disappointment in his work that affected him. In order to rouse him he said that he had met Mrs. Broadbeam and she had told him the Skewgills were very much shocked at his spending Saturday evening with Silas and the rest of the old gang at the "Archangel."

"I don't see that it's any business of theirs," Guy replied. "Silas and the others were all perfectly sober. They enjoyed seeing my sketches, and I enjoyed their stories. Silas has a remarkable gift that way; though I daresay if I heard him often I might get bored. He's rather full of the Bible and the graveyard."

"Of course, he is," said Jim; "so would you be if you had read little but the Bible and had buried all the old villagers for the last forty years. All the same, he's a shrewd old chap; and if he had been properly educated he would have gone far. As a matter of fact, he is rather better educated than most of the villagers,

but he likes to talk Lancashire and prides himself on being one of the real old stock. He's a rugged old fellow. There's a lot of character in his face. Don't you think so?"

"I do," Guy assented. "I have some sketches of him and his cronies that will prove useful to me. Wonderful faces some of them, scored by life and marked with character. That old room at the 'Archangel' would make a fine setting for a group. I should like to paint a picture of them before they die out, just as your old black-and-white houses are dying out. The worst of it is, one can't convey their spirit in a picture any more than one can represent the atmosphere of these old black-and-white houses. I shan't forget my Saturday evening at the 'Archangel' in a hurry. I must start on that picture while the memory of it grips me."

"I thought you had your hands full with Jobling's ballroom?"

Guy laughed rather bitterly. "I've chucked that. He was confoundedly rude to me, so I told him I'd never do another stroke of work for him."

"Phew! The devil you have! Don't you intend to go there again?"

"Certainly not; though I should like to stay here if I may, but you must tell me if it's inconvenient. If it is, I can put up at the 'Archangel' while I'm making my studies."

"Rot! You'll do nothing of the kind. Of course, we are only too glad to have you. Stay as long as you like; the house is big enough, in all conscience. You keep us alive, and my father would miss you a lot. Besides there would be a fine scandal if you went to the 'Archangel'. They'd say, 'Squire turnt him eawt cos of 'is carryings on at th' 'Archangel,' and Jobling's

turnt him eawt as weel, so he must be a proper nowty one.' A nice story they'd make of it all before they had done. But what on earth have you and Jobling been up to? I told you what an old bounder he was, but you were so full of your golden cocoon that you wouldn't listen to me. What does Aurora think of it? Have you quarrelled with her too?"

"N-n-no," said Guy, "We parted as friends."

"Hum!" said Jim, and knocked the ashes out of his pipe. He filled it again slowly, and then looked quizzically at his friend.

"You needn't look like that, Jim," said Guy, "it's quite straightforward. Honour bright. We are excellent friends. Nothing more."

"Does father Jobling approve of his daughter's friendship?"

"I don't suppose he does. In fact, I know he doesn't. But Aurora can hold her own and, as I say, we remain friends."

"Hum! friends! I've heard that word before. Well, I'm blessed! But I'm sorry you've wasted all that time there, old man." After a short silence he said; "Did I tell you that one of our school-fellows, Roy Mackay, is coming here to-morrow to fix up some business in Tattleton?"

"No, but you told me that you went to see him at Filby Green about something of the kind. I should like to meet him again; he wasn't a bad fellow, very clever at mathematics and full of self-confidence. I should imagine he'd make a good business man."

"He *is* a smart business man," said Jim. "My boss, Old Greenwood, is thinking of taking us both into partnership, and Roy's coming to spend a few days here to look round. If it comes off it will be a jolly good thing for me, and for Roy, too, for the matter of that.

I like Old Greenwood; he's keen on his Works and he's what they call jannock."

"Why doesn't he bring some of his own family in?"

"He's got no one who could carry it on."

"Is Jobling going to join him?"

"Jobling! Greenwood wouldn't touch him with a pair of tongs. Jobling would treat any shares he got as a speculation. It's all very well to pull my leg, but you know Jobling now."

"I don't know that I do," said Guy; "but I don't want to have anything more to do with him. I do know that."

Guy spent the next morning in the village. On his way there he looked in on Mrs. Broadbeam and asked after her father.

"He's reet enough," she said, "but he won't allow as he's getting old. Folk are made that way. When they are young they won't allow as they're young, and when they are old they won't allow as they're old. But thank you kindly for asking me. He comes to see me in the afternoon as often as not, and he tells me what folk are saying in the village. He told me about your doings at the 'Archangel'; he said they were fain to see your drawings, they were quite set up about them."

"Yes, I think they liked looking at them, and I enjoyed their tales. Silas has a gift that way."

"Aye, he has. He likes a tale better till owt else, save 'appen a glass of ale. He does that. Father said you enjoyed them. I don't see much harm in the 'Archangel'. If all th' pubs were like that there wouldn't be much to say against them. It's different at the 'Pot and Kettle'. The landlord there is out to get all the beer down their throats as he can. But Susannah's against them all. If you happen on

Susannah she'll talk to you about going to the 'Archangel.' She will thot."

"So I hear. She thinks the only way to avoid hell-fire is to drink nothing but water. If she talks to me about it I shall tell her I don't believe in hell-fire."

"Best say nowt, Master Guy; if you do, Susannah'll only turn Skewgill on you."

"Capital, that would just suit me. I want to study them both in action. Two fountains spouting water and hell-fire at once. You don't believe in hell-fire, do you?"

"I can't say as I do; leastways, I don't howd with everlasting punishment an' the worm as never dies, an' I don't howd with a worm as never turns neither. What I ses is—If a child does what it shouldn't, turn it downside up on your knee and smack it, 'appen half a dozen times, and no more. Where would be the sense of going on smacking it for ever and ever Amen, I'd like to know? The Almighty's hands are bigger than mine and I reckon He's more sparing in the use of them. He made us and He knows what to expect from us."

Guy laughed, and said, "If I meet Susannah I'll send her on to you and you can deal with her for me."

From Mrs. Broadbeam's he went on to the old Tattlefold bridge and stood in the triangular recess over the central pier, looking down the valley past the chimneys of Tattleton towards Goldmark Hall. While he was standing there the old Doctor came along, so they both went through the village up the hill together. As they did so Guy remarked, "This must have been a very beautiful valley before it was spoilt by the manufacturing works; even now in certain lights it is beautiful."

"Yes," replied the Doctor, "but it has changed greatly since I first came. I have spent most of my life here, and I dislike the changes almost as much as Silas does. Still, I can't expect young people to look upon them as I do."

"Perhaps not," Guy replied; "but I think I understand how you feel about it. Until I came here I had never seen a manufacturing district. If I were the Squire I should hate those chimneys as much as he does, and if I were Silas I should feel as strongly as he does about the newcomers. I like the old folk and their ways; they are so natural and so friendly."

"Yes," said the Doctor, "but you came to the Hall. They look upon you as Jim's friend. You showed the old folk your sketches, and they like your free and easy ways." Here the Doctor smiled shrewdly, and then asked him, "Have you shown your sketches to Mrs. Skewgill yet?"

Guy laughed. "I looked in on Mrs. Broadbeam and she warned me that the Skewgills were out for my blood. I'm going to the 'Archangel' now to make some drawings of the old rooms and the staircase. Mat Spiggot said I might come when I liked, so long as I avoided their busy times."

"I thought you were fully occupied at Goldmark Hall," the Doctor remarked.

"So I was," Guy replied; "but I found I couldn't see eye to eye with Jobling, so I have given that up."

The Doctor looked surprised, but before more could be said Silas, who was busy in the churchyard, hailed them. They stopped and waited for him to come to the gate, then the Doctor shook his head at him, and said, "You'll catch it, Silas. Mrs. Skewgill is going to take you to task for leading Mr. Hetheridge to the

public-house. The old should not lead the young astray."

"Nay, nay, Doctor. That tale won't howd watter."

Guy laughed, and said, "Don't you think I could get some good sketches of the people down there if I gave her a small subscription?"

"Nay, nay. Yo'll get nowt for yore brass if yo do. What art oop to now, gadding about village this time o' morning?"

"I'm going to the 'Archangel' to draw some of the rooms there. Some day I mean to paint a picture of you telling respectable tales to your friends on a Saturday night."

"Go thy ways. I reckon yo be a nowty one. Yo mun mind as Susannah doesn't catch yo on th' door-step."

Guy then turned in to the "Archangel" and was soon absorbed in his drawing. When he came out at midday he met the Professor coming up the hill, and accepted an invitation to spend an hour or two with him at the Old Hall that afternoon.

A blustering northerly gale was blowing down the valley when Guy Hetheridge left Tattle Hall to visit the Professor. The smoke from the chimneys of Tattleton streamed away south, leaving Tattlefold clear on the hillside, with its church tower sharply outlined against the sky. The belt of trees which sheltered the Hall from the north had been sadly thinned by the acrid acid fumes borne thither from the alkali works by the prevailing winds. Withered trees thrust out blue black branches that stood stark and stiff against the blast as the gusts roared through the little wood, smooth brittle branches that had neither bark nor rot left on them by the acid.

As Hetheridge passed the skeleton trees he shivered, more from disgust than from cold. How he loathed

those alkali chimneys, with their whitish fumes. Some of the works turned out their poison by night, so a recording weathercock was kept at the Town Hall of Tattleton which marked the direction of the wind from hour to hour on a chart, by which the farmers were able to identify the works which had done the damage to their crops; but there was no compensation for the dead trees and the ruined country-side.

When he passed out of the park on to the road by the river, the hoarse-rushing sound of the Devil's Cauldron and the foul smell of the stream only increased his disgust. It was a relief when he turned up the path that led through the little clough towards the hill top above Tattlefold. Here, sheltered from the wind, sycamore bushes and thorns still grew and brambles flourished, but the beauty that once dwelt there was a thing of the past.

Lulled by the quiet of the little clough his mind reverted to Goldmark Hall. The prevailing winds carried the devastating alkali fumes away from that so the shrubs and trees managed to exist there, but the futile display and vulgarity of the Hall and its grounds seemed even more loathsome to him than the devastation of Tattle Park. He thought of Aurora—a bird in a golden cage with a vulgar jailor. A sleeping beauty who refused to be wakened. Then a sudden question arose in his mind and confronted him: had he really tried to waken her? She cared for him. Once or twice she had been on the point of yielding to him, then his artistic perception of her beauty had intervened. Was she right in saying that whoever married him must always be content to come second to his art? Was it true that she could never enter into that art? How strongly she had clung to the idea that her duty bound her to the chimneys of Tattleton.

Coming out at the top of the little clough near the Doctor's house the blast of the northern storm struck him more fiercely than ever. Below on his left lay the village of Tattlefold with its old church and tower. A sturdy race those old folk of Tattlefold. Of a stronger breed than he was. And they need be. Such were his thoughts as he turned into the short drive that led up to the Old Hall.

The Professor was on the look-out for him and welcomed him warmly. "Ach, but you are cold," he said, and taking him into his library he continued, "Here is a good fire, and we can enjoy our talks without being disturbed; my wife, she has other things to do. You have already seen most of my rooms, and you no longer expect to see anythings of the art which you do love upon my walls. The only art we do know somethings of is the music; nevertheless, I do love the nature when she is beautiful, and I did have that bow window made large so that I could look out to the right of the church, there, soh, right away over the valley to the hills on the other side. Since I have come here all down the valley towards Wiggleton is many more chimneys built, but when the wind does come from the north, as it is now, it does blow the smoke and the stinks down the valley, and when the light is no longer strong the ugliness of the manufacture does hide itself. The view is sometimes quite beautiful as the sun does set over there."

"There is nothing I like better," responded Guy, "than watching the changes of light and shade over a landscape. I feel as if some great artist were making experiments and I were looking on. I can understand how music may thrill one in the same way; indeed, I feel that sometimes myself but not so keenly. When great clouds are sailing about in the sun I am carried

away as if on wings, between great walls of dazzling mist past overhanging precipices of purple shadow and out again into the light. But afterwards, if I try to set down what I have seen, I am surprised to find how little I remember, though the thrill remains."

"That have I also experienced," said the Professor; "but I do not try to remember what I have seen. I do just enjoy it. You, on the other hand, do train yourself to grasp these things and remember them so as to make the beautiful pictures. Nevertheless, I do think it is the first thrill that does lead to the other things. It is the Great Creator Artist that does touch the strings of our soul and give birth to the music, the painting, the poetry. He is the spring and fountain of desire, the Lord of Life. He does touch us with His flame. Somethings does come to us that is not of this world that we do see with the eyes of everyday."

"I understand what you mean," said Guy; "but I am perhaps too anxious to look on anything beautiful as something to be grasped and held if possible. In doing so I am often conscious of losing some of the thrill in the effort to retain. Of course, I recognise that no artist can even follow, much less memorise, all the magical effects of varying light and shade. I have seen a beautiful mountain village, bathed in golden rainbow-tinted mists at sunrise, become clear and hard directly the sun rose. A scientific friend described to me how the first horizontal rays of light were split by the moisture-laden air. A quickly passing effect, but one that no brush could render; nor could any scientific description dim my memory of its glories."

"Ach!" the Professor exclaimed. "Nothings is more wonderful than the light. How can any man expect to grasp even the hem of the garment in which the great Spirit of Light does clothe Himself? I always do

think the nearest expression of the reality was the simple one of the poet who did say, 'God said let there be light, and there was light.' The inspiration is like the light, it does come and go even as 'His Spirit did move upon the face of the waters.' The inspiration is the necessary beginning of great achievement, but the artist, who has observed much and has the great dexterity, he alone can complete what the inspiration did begin. Your Turner did take many papers out with him to make the quick sketches of the sunrise and the sunset from which to paint his wonderful pictures. It is said that he did get the sailors also to tie him to the mast during the storm when they thought the ship did wreck itself, so that he might make the picture of the storm."

"Even then," said Guy, "there still remains the great difficulty of recognising what is possible; what to put in, what leave out, what to emphasise and focus, in order to produce a work of art. Only amateurs attempt to paint all they see. There is no reason why they should not try to jump over the moon if they want to, but that recreation is denied the artist."

"Ach!" said the Professor, "you are too hard on the amateur. It is only the Joblings that do like to jump over the moons and expect all the peoples round to clap their hands and say, 'That is very fine'; but that makes nothings."

The conversation then drifted into a discussion on art and manufacture, the Professor insisting that art must in no way impair the serviceable qualities of any article of common use. After that the Professor asked Guy how he was getting on with his work at Goldmark Hall, and when the latter explained that he had refused to go on with it, he said, "I am not surprised. If I was an artist I would not work for the Joblings. I could

not do so. He is a man without ideals or imaginations, except the vain ones concerning his own self."

Finding the Professor so understanding, Guy told him about his doubts and difficulties. When he had done so the Professor said, "It is strange that this so common man should have the fine daughter, Aurora. I have sorrow for her, but she is quite right; the Chimneys of Tattleton do belong to her life, her ties do lie in this world of manufacture, she could not enter into your life which is bound up in an art she does not understand. If all the peoples had the strong common-sense like that there would be few tragedies. I am sorry for her, but not for you, my friend; you are free and you have the art, that will always stand first with you. It is your life. I do hope you will not be disappointed in it. The art does ask much from those who do serve her; she has also much to give. Few peoples do get the opportunity of leading the life that does suit them best; in that you are fortunate."

When Guy returned to Tattle Hall he found that Roy Mackay had arrived. Jim had left him in the drawing-room with Mistress Polly and Miss Penny while he went to see his father. Roy was amusing himself by drawing Miss Penny into argument on various subjects, and when Guy entered the room they were discussing the question of compromise—one of Roy's favourite themes. Miss Penny would only admit that compromise was an expedient for reconciling conflicting views in public and private business, while on the other hand she maintained that for the individual it was morally weakening. But when Roy went on to advocate mass production at the expense of quality for articles in general use she became most earnest in her objections. After a long argument she ended by saying, "I cannot think that you are really serious

in attaching so little value to quality. I understand you are contemplating entering into business with Mr. James and Mr. Greenwood, both of whom attach the utmost importance to the quality of the machinery they produce. When you speak of the quality of an article you should define what quality or qualities you think essential, placing first those which appertain to utility and durability."

Then she continued in her more contemplative manner, as if to herself, "I am afraid young men often lay down unsound propositions without sufficient thought, and for the sake of mere argument they adopt views that they would never dream of putting into practice. It will be interesting to hear what Mr. Greenwood and James will think of these views, views evidently formed on insufficient data. I feel certain they do attach the very highest importance to quality of workmanship in the machines they make and will treat these views as eminently unsound."

Then, looking earnestly at Roy, she addressed him again, "James knows you well, and he has no doubt satisfied himself that you merely advocate these views for the purpose of conversational argument." The abstracted look returned as she continued, "You appear both intelligent and purposeful, with a lively and somewhat assertive spirit. The latter may be counted a fault on the right side, since age and experience is likely to moderate it."

Jim, who had entered the room unnoticed, laughed when Miss Penny had finished, and said, "Bravo, Miss Penny, neither Mr. Greenwood nor I could have put it half so well."

CHAPTER XVIII

CROSS PURPOSES

BEFORE leaving Guy Hetheridge on the top of the tower, Aurora turned to him and said in a low voice, which her father below could not hear, "After what has happened I must go down with my father. I will see you later whatever he may say; in the meantime, it is best that I should leave you here and go down to the house with him alone. Now, at least, you understand the difficulties which beset my life."

When she joined her father at the foot of the tower he greeted her angrily. "So you have come down at last. What did you say to him before you left him?"

She looked calmly at her father and then replied, "Not now. I will tell you later."

On hearing that he burst out, "I insist——" but before he could say more she repeated, "Not now, father; I will tell you later." As she continued to look at him with an air of surprise his anger died down, and was succeeded by a feeling of helplessness; he remembered the time when she had said to him, "Do think of others and not of yourself," but she had promised to tell him, and he meant to keep her to her promise.

They walked down to the house together without exchanging another word; when they reached it, she said, "I will tell you now, if you still wish me to do so."

"I do wish it," he replied.

They went into the library and sat down close to the big central table on which his bust was standing with its face turned complacently towards them, but they were far too absorbed by the events of the afternoon to notice that. Aurora hesitated a moment before speaking, and her father said impatiently, "You promised to tell me; and I insist on hearing what you said to Hetheridge after he refused to work any longer for me. I insist on knowing all. I saw you talking to him on the top of the tower, but I could not hear what you were saying. You spoke low on purpose that I should not hear. You promised to tell me, and I insist on hearing all."

She answered at once, "Don't get impatient and threaten; it will be worse if you do, father. You spoke to Mr. Hetheridge as if he were your slave. No man would have stood it. I am glad he answered you back; I should have thought ill of him if he hadn't. I promised I would tell you what I said to him after your quarrel. Do you still insist on hearing it—all?"

As Aurora put the question her face stiffened and she looked hard at him, but he was too excited to heed her warning look. Again he said, "I insist!"

"Very well, father, I will. What I said to him was, "After what has passed I must go down to my father. I will see you later whatever he may say; in the meantime, it is best that I should leave you here and go down to the house with him alone." Then she paused, and said, "There was something more, but I would rather not repeat it. You will regret it if I do, father."

"You promised to tell me, Aurora. Tell me all. I insist on hearing it."

"Very well, father; since you insist, you shall hear

it. It was this, 'Now, at least, you understand what difficulties beset my life.'"

"Umph!"

Had a bombshell exploded in the room it would hardly have startled Mr. Jobling more. Both he and Aurora had been so absorbed in what had taken place that they failed to notice Grandpa in the "sleepy hollow" by the fire. Mr. Jobling was not only surprised but he wondered if Grandpa had heard all that was said; and, if he had, what he would do? He was not left long in suspense.

Grandpa leant forward, looked at them, chuckled, and then said, "Jobling's an ass. Doesn't know a good daughter from a bad one. Glad I have left half of my money to her. Go and think it over, Jobling. I'll talk to Aurora. Grandpa will see she does as she likes. Umph! 'I insist!' Silly fool, Jobling, to insist."

At last Mr. Jobling realised the hopeless position he was in and left the room without another word. He had done the very thing his wife had warned him not to do, and now he was powerless; he could not prevent Aurora from marrying Guy Hetheridge if she wished to. His handsome eldest daughter married to a mere artist! What could be more humiliating for Josiah Jobling, of Goldmark Hall, ex-Mayor of Wiggleton? And—to think of it!—she might have been Lady Newpen!

When her father left the room Aurora sat down beside her grandfather. The old man remained quite still, looking into the fire. She took his hand and began stroking it. At last she said to him, "Poor papa, he's very upset. I seem doomed to disappoint him. He treated Guy shamefully; I believe he thought I had made up my mind to marry him."

"Umph! Have you?"

"No."

"Why not? Nice boy. Don't you like him?"

"Yes, I do. But whoever marries him must give up everything for his sake. Or, at least, for the sake of his career as an artist. Art will always be his first love. I couldn't devote my life to his career as an artist."

"Umph!—I think you're right."

"Grandpa!"

"Yes."

"Do you think you ought to leave me so much money?"

"How do you know I have so much?"

"I have heard them talking about it."

"Aurora."

"Yes, Grandpa."

"Poor papa's a fool, and you know it. Marry when you like. Newpen's coming."

"So father said."

"Do as you like. Don't forget poor papa's a fool. Newpen isn't. Can't bear Newpen, but do as you like."

They sat together a little longer, then Grandpa said, "Better go and talk to Guy."

Aurora got up wearily and said, "I suppose I must." Then she went to the ballroom.

She found Guy had put her portrait on the easel and was adding some touches to it. He was so absorbed in what he was doing that he didn't notice her coming in. She had made up her mind to have a clear understanding with him, but seeing him occupied with her portrait she was filled with regret. At that moment he looked up and their eyes met. The same emotion seized them both. He made a

step forward, and then it flashed in on him that he had never seen anything so beautiful. That thought arrested him, and he remained absorbed in contemplation.

Aurora knew that look full well. It had always been so, art must always come first with him; this art which she could never share. She broke the silence by asking him if he wasn't satisfied with the portrait. He seemed like one awakened from a dream. Flushing with the swift return of consciousness he spoke with a curious catch in his voice. "I have never seen anything so beautiful. How can I be satisfied with my portrait of you?"

Aurora smiled, not bitterly, but as a mother might at a wayward child, and remarked, "Now at least, if you will only think, you must understand all." She dwelt on the last word, then continued, "I came to tell you how shocked I was at my father's behaviour to you. He is my father, and I was obliged to leave you then. Surely we understand one another now? One thing has always stood between us—your art."

As she said that, Guy threw down his brush and made a sudden move towards her. "Stay!" she said, "I have told you how many lives have been spoiled by impulse. Let us be perfectly frank with each other. Whoever you marry must be able to devote herself to you and to your art; she must be content to stand by while you are so absorbed in your art that you can think of nothing else. I have too little understanding and too little love of your art; our union could only lead to disillusionment and failure. I care for you too much to injure your art. Your art would always stand as a barrier between us, but there is no reason why we should not remain friends."

Guy, who had listened patiently so far, said bitterly, "I don't think your father will look at it that way."

"Perhaps not," she said, "but my father now understands that I mean to be guided entirely by my own judgment in this matter. Surely you will agree?"

She waited quietly for an answer with a sad look on her face; and at last he said calmly enough, "If you say I must, of course I must."

They talked together for some time after that, and when they parted, she said, "I am glad you understand, and agree."

On her way back from the ball-room she looked in on Grandpa, for she knew he was anxious about her. She told him they had agreed to remain friends and nothing more. Grandpa greeted the word friends with an "Umph" almost as emphatic as the one that had startled Mr. Jobling, but when she had explained how matters stood, he started chuckling and said, "Poor Papa!"

After that Aurora went to see her mother. She found her sitting up in front of her bedroom fire. She had not seen her husband, but Aurora knew that he was certain to come in before long and tell her mother what had happened, so she determined to prepare her, and began by telling her that Lord Newpen was coming. Her mother expressed surprise, and when she heard what had taken place up at the tower she was so distressed that Aurora almost regretted she had entered on the subject. She assured her mother, however, that the situation was unavoidable, and that it was better it should be cleared up now than later.

Mr. Jobling came into the room before they had time to talk it over. He was very restless, and asked Aurora if she had seen the housekeeper and made arrangements for Lord Newpen's visit. He was most

anxious that everything should be done to make him feel at home. So Aurora had to leave them together.

No sooner had she gone than Mr. Jobling asked, "Has Aurora said anything to you?"

His wife replied, "Yes, she told me what happened this afternoon. I don't think you understand her."

Mr. Jobling exploded. "Understand her! She doesn't understand what is due to me. Carrying on with that young artist! I wish I had never let him come here. He was very impudent up at the tower there, but I put him in his place. If you had been firmer with Aurora in the past there wouldn't have been all this trouble now."

"Josiah, dear, you needn't shout, it makes my head ache. You don't understand Aurora. You have just done exactly what I warned you not to do."

"Warned me!"

"Yes, dear. Warned you. But you are so impetuous you never stop to think. You put yourself in a false position with Mr. Hetheridge this afternoon. It was very humiliating for Aurora."

"Humiliating for Aurora!"

"Yes, Josiah dear. And for you, too."

"For me?"

"Yes. For you."

Before Mr. Jobling could answer, there was a knock at the door and an elderly maid came in to look at the fire and give Mrs. Jobling her medicine. She remarked quietly, "You do look tired, mum! Shall I make the bed down for you?"

"Very well. I am rather tired. I will go to bed now. You can stay and help me. Good-night, Josiah dear."

So Mr. Jobling was obliged to take his grievances elsewhere. He would have been even more annoyed if he had heard the maid say after he left, "I hope

I didn't come too soon, mum, but Miss Aurora gave me a hint that you might be needing a rest, so I came." An explanation that was acknowledged with a smile. Blundering bluebottles are a nuisance but there are many ways of disposing of them.

Lord Newpen's first evening at Goldmark Hall was not altogether successful; his host was assiduous and effusive, but evidently uneasy about something. Grandpa, though silent, seemed more alert than usual, and his lordship had an uneasy feeling that he was being watched. Aurora, who occupied her mother's place, did her best to entertain him under obviously difficult circumstances. When he retired to his bedroom for the night he was conscious of a greatly increased admiration for her and of a feeling of chill isolation which puzzled him. Aurora was an admirable hostess, there was no doubt about that; her beauty and dignity would adorn any position—but—? It was that *but* that troubled him. She was undoubtedly aloof and critical—especially with regard to him. Why?

Although Lord Newpen was gifted and refined as well as courteous, and even considerate when it suited him to be so, yet he held that all was fair in love and war. It was true that this was not exactly a case of love or war, but it had the elements of both; so he determined to explore the ground. He rang the bell for the butler. When the butler answered it he asked him a few trivial questions about the arrangements for the next day, then he remarked, "I understand Mrs. Jobling has been very ill and is likely to be an invalid for some time."

"'Deed then, sorr, it's herself that was in and out of death's door, but is getting her health again nicely now, praise be to God."

Lord Newpen looked sharply at him, and said, "It must have been a great shock to Mr. Jobling, he seems very upset. I hope he has no other cause for anxiety."

"I wouldn't say myself that there hadn't been a bit of a shindy, sorr."

"A shindy! You must be mistaken. You are not in Ireland. How could there be such a thing as a shindy in Goldmark Hall? Eh!"

The butler was a quick-witted Irishman, he accepted the "Eh" as an invitation and replied accordingly, "It's not myself that would be saying anything to deceive you, sorr, but it was myself that was taking a walk through the wood beyant with the tower just above me after I'd been seeing a friend of me own. Your honour knows the tower on the hill above, the same as the bhoys will be calling Jobling's Castle?"

"Yes, I know it."

"Bedad then, as I was walking in the wood below it I heard a shindy going on up above. It's gospel truth that I'm telling you. Young Mr. Hetheridge, the same that's painting the ballroom, was standing beside Miss Aurora on the top of the tower, and down below at the foot of it the master was raging like an Oirish bull when the bhoys are after making faces at him over the wall."

"You must have been mistaken. I expect they were trying to call Mr. Jobling's attention to something and you must have imagined the rest. Were you sober?"

"Myself sober? May the saints be praised it's myself that's the teetotaller now, thanks be to God and Mrs. Skewgill. May the devil take her!—I'm telling you nothing but the gospel truth. I'd nothing more inside of me than a two-three glasses of whisky

and was as sober as a churchwarden when he comes round with the collecting bag. It's gospel truth, sorr; I heard them swearing at each other like Kilkenny cats. You can ask the master himself if Mr. Hetheridge hasn't taken his paints away with him and won't do another stroke of work on the dancing-room. But if you were to ask me what I'm thinking of it, it's the master himself as doesn't want Mr. Hetheridge as a son-in-law."

It was evident to Lord Newpen, when he turned the matter over in his mind afterwards, that something must have happened, however absurd the story might seem. He could easily find out whether Hetheridge had given up his work in the ball-room; if he had, that might simplify matters, but it behoved him to walk warily.

Next morning was clear and frosty, and Lord Newpen was free until the afternoon, so Mr. Jobling asked his daughter to take his lordship round the grounds. As they started out Aurora called to mind her walks at Filby Green and longed to be free again, but Lord Newpen proved unexpectedly companionable; he was well read, he had travelled much, and had met many interesting people. He also knew how to make himself agreeable without effort, and she found him entertaining. In short, they both enjoyed their morning's walk.

During the following days Mr. Jobling contrived that Aurora and Lord Newpen should be thrown together as much as possible. Aurora felt unable to prevent this, and Lord Newpen, who was careful to fall in with her wishes, avoided paying her any specially marked attention. He was so tactful and considerate that by the end of the week she found herself wondering whether it would be possible to marry

him, and what life with him would be like. A dangerous state of mind this, and one she would never have yielded to if she had not been wearied of the continual friction with her father. She was almost beginning to think of Goldmark Hall as a prison.

Mr. Jobling was highly delighted with the success of his plans, and looked back on the first week of his lordship's visit with complete satisfaction. He even expressed a desire to consider the endowment of scholarships in the manufacturing districts, for students who might wish to enter the college which Lord Newpen was endeavouring to found at Oxbridge.

With fortune thus smiling on his plans, Mr. Jobling sat down to dine on Aurora's birthday. He had invited Alderman Dauber and his wife, and Dr. Oldbird, and some local magnates with their wives to meet Lord Newpen on this occasion. The repast was long and sumptuous; Lord Newpen was the centre of attraction, and he condescended to meet his host's exuberant humour half-way. Even when good food and wine had rendered Mr. Jobling ponderously facetious and not a little familiar, Lord Newpen still met his embarrassing remarks with imperturbable good humour and ready banter.

After the ladies had withdrawn Mr. Jobling rose, as mysteriously as it was possible for a Jobling to rise, and unlocked a little cupboard in the mantelpiece with fitting solemnity. And lo!—one of the last magnums of his most celebrated port, and a bottle of priceless Madeira!

Now, Lord Newpen enjoyed a good glass of wine as well as anyone; even so he was most careful not to exceed a certain limit. That limit had been reached when these wonderful wines were produced. But Lord Newpen was a connoisseur of rare vintages, and,

under the circumstances, he felt constrained to indulge the wishes of his host by sampling the wines. He not only expressed high appreciation of them but even said he had never tasted such wonderful Madeira. In fine he took rather more than was good for him. He was by no means intoxicated; even a rude school-boy would have hesitated before calling him "squiffy," but next morning he awoke with a headache and he felt bilious and thoroughly disgruntled.

Alas, that such a small thing as an extra glass or two of Madeira should disturb the equanimity of a noble lord, but so it was. He had perforce to come down to breakfast in order to attend a great function in Wiggleton; his host was taking him to the town hall and Aurora was going with them. Breakfast was a dismal meal; his lordship not only looked pale and wrinkled, but there was a tinge of yellow at the roots of his hair which told an unmistakable tale. The comparison with Aurora's splendid youth was unavoidable; she could not fail to see and understand, but her father apparently did not notice, and his irrepressibly high spirits only made matters worse. Nothing could have been more irritating to his lordship than having this vulgar gilt ball of a man with red hair and aggressive manner simply bounding beside him.

Directly after breakfast Mr. Jobling insisted on taking Lord Newpen round his stables. As they walked beside one another he kept bumping into his lordship, for when Mr. Jobling was excited he gave way to that deadly habit which some people are unable to resist. Had Mrs. Jobling been in his lordship's place she would have said, "Josiah dear, if you can't keep your distance and must go on walking into me like that, it will be best for you to walk behind." But his lordship could not say that. Even the drive

into Wiggleton in the gilded family coach afforded no relief from Mr. Jobling's well-meant intentions. Mr. Jobling was, in truth, filled with jubilation at the success of his plans; his joy was so great, he simply couldn't sit still.

Just as they were entering the square in front of the town hall one of the horses slipped and fell when turning sharply to avoid a tradesman's lorry. They were obliged to leave the carriage there and walk to the town hall. Then, just in front of it, they encountered Priscilla with Roy and Guy. Mr. Jobling was evidently determined to pass without a sign of recognition, although Priscilla had bowed to him and the other two had raised their hats. Seeing this, Aurora, moved by a sudden impulse, greeted them warmly, and introduced the young men to Lord Newpen.

This was all done so suddenly that Mr. Jobling was unable to interfere. Indeed, it was only then that he realised how his plans had miscarried; and, as he passed into the town hall disappointed and angry, but one thought brought relief. He was not definitely committed to any of Lord Newpen's educational schemes.

That evening at Goldmark Hall Grandpa was amply rewarded by the spectacle of a sullen, collapsed Jobling, a disgruntled Newpen, and a silent Aurora. When Lord Newpen left Goldmark Hall next day he may be said to have shaken its dust from off his feet. His visit had been a failure in every respect; his speech at the town hall had been spoilt; he hadn't got a penny out of Mr. Jobling for educational purposes; and Aurora was no longer assailable.

CHAPTER XIX

THE RIGHTS OF THINGS

WITH the rapid growth of Tattleton several religious bodies had come into existence, but that presided over by Mr. Skewgill was still the most active among the workpeople. His fiery zeal and his direct teaching of reward and punishment, coupled with a vivid representation of the terrors of hell, attracted the colliers and the mill-hands, while his ministrations were greatly assisted by his wife's militant teetotalism.

Since the new chapel was built the old one had been turned into a Sunday School, which was used during the week for lectures, night-classes, concerts and even political meetings; for Mr. Skewgill and his wife Susannah were ardent reformers as well as fervent religious and temperance devotees. Susannah approved of the Women's Rights Movement, chiefly because she thought it would enable women to protect themselves and their children from husbands who spent their money on drink; so when Priscilla Prickles approached her about a meeting, she welcomed the proposal on the understanding that it was to be a workpeople's meeting. It was finally arranged that Susannah should take the chair and Priscilla should give the address, after which there would be one of those informal discussions which the workpeople liked.

The meeting was well attended. Susannah introduced Miss Prickles, with a few "felicitous remarks," then Miss Prickles put forward the usual pleas in support of the movement; after that it seemed as if the meeting might prove a failure for no one appeared to take sufficient interest in the matter to take part in a discussion. Then Sarah Broadbeam came to the rescue. That remarkable woman stood up, made her way to the platform, turned round, and faced her audience squarely. "Weel," she said, "I never thowt as I'd ever stand on a platform as I'm doing now."

A voice, "Mind it don't give way wi' thee, Sal."

"That's aw reet," she replied, "Strong i' th' Arm seed to that hissels'; he said it ud stand an elephant a tramplin' reawnt on it so I'm noan feart o' it giving way with me neither. What I *am* feart on is as I'll get moidered and forget what I wants to say to yo, so doan yo go for to flustergate me. What I wants to say is I'm thinking these Women's Righters aren't as wrong as I thowt they was. I had thowt as they were busybodies as 'ad nowt to do but make mischief between the men and the women because they weren't marrit theyselves; now I thinks different, I think as they'll help the workers, I do thot.

"I mun begin at the beginning if I'm to tell you how that may be in my thinking. Theer be some things as gentry manage worse till the rest o' us. Marryin's one of um. If a young mon o' theirs wants to marry one of their gals, fust thing as he's got to do is to make sheep's eyes at her; then if she looks soft-like at him, he ses, 'Ow wud it do if we was to keep company, or, as the saying is, get engaged? Then 'appen she looks down on to th' ground, shy like, and ses to him, 'Yo mun make up to my Mamma first.'

—‘Ow con I do thot?’ ses he. ‘Weel,’ she ses, ‘yo mun pick up her ball o’ wool, find her specs for her and make friends with th’ dog and cat and her canary, and such like. When I think she’s ready to favver yo, yo can say what a fine gal I am and how I remind you of her, and how you’d like to have her as your Mamma; then, when yo see your chanct, just yo go right in an’ arst her to help yo with Pa; he’s a tough nut he is, an’ we mun go easy with him at fust.”

A Voice, “Who’s been puttin’ aw thot in thy yed, Sal?”

“Never yo mind who’s been putting it in my head an’ who hasn’t. Doan yo go for to put it eawt o’ my head. Just yo leave me alone. Yo con coom oop here when I’ve done. Weel, as I was a telling yo, when Ma and her datter has got Pa on the run, then cooms th’ time to let the young man loose on ’im, so as to get th’ courtin’ fair started, thee kneaws. Weel, fust thing as Pa does is to turn th’ young mon’s pockets inside out to see if theer’s enough intil them to feed the datter an’ ’appen a dozen childer——”

“Neaw, neaw, Sal,” her father protested; “yo’ve ’ad but ten yoresel’ an’ gentry baint given thot road.”

“Weel, feyther, yo never know what yo mun expect; theer be contingents an’ they mun be provided for.”

“Contingents be dommed, yore mother never ’ad no contingents nor——”

Here Mrs. Broadbeam’s father was called to order, and she proceeded. “Weel, howsomedevour they might settle as to contingents, th’ young mon has a real bad time with Pa, for he knows if Pa onct gets into a tantrum he’ll be sent away with a flea in his ear as soon as not. But supposin’ th’ engagement is fixed up, then th’ young mon has to run about arter th’ datter same as a poodle dog ’as to arter its mistress.

I tell yo, it's nowt but a kind of Rachel and Laban business without ever a chanct o' getting a rise out of Pa, same as Jacob did out o' Laban. So as I ses, th' young mon has to go wasting aw his time running about arter th' datter right on till th' wedding day. Arter that it's th' young mon's turn. He's got th' upper hand then through datter being tied up wi' him in th' bands o' 'oly matrimony. He's got her safe an' con do what he likes wi' her so long as he keeps inside o' th' law an' doan knock 'er silly. He isn't even obligated to keep aw th' ten commandments. Neaw, I arst yo—What's the sense in aw thot? 'Thot's how gentry goes about their marrying. With us it's different. We working people has equal rights. A lass'll arst a lad to marry her as soon as not, and theer's no Pa or Ma to coom in, mind yo—"

Here the Weasel piped up. "Sam never had much to say for himself; I reckon you did the asking."

"Yo leave my Sam alone," said Mrs. Broadbeam. "He mayn't say much, but he's master in our house an' that's more than you are in yours."

This was received with cheers.

"Weel, I haven't got no more to say, but," she continued, "all as I arsts yo is this. Ain't it better for lads and lasses to settle it up comfortable like among theyselves, with 'appen a little bit of advice if they'll tak' it? But as to advice, yo colliers mun bear in mind as a lad'll make as good money down pit as his feyther will, an' lads is ill to handle, they be thot." Here Mrs. Broadbeam paused; then she said, "Theer's just one other thing as I'd like to speak on while I'm about it. With th' workers the gals as don't get marrit can make their own living i' th' mills; but with th' gentry lasses as doan get marrit 'ave nowt to do but set i' th' drawin'-rooms an' play th' pianner or paint

posies an' such like. If they wants to go out an' do a bit of wark for themselves, Pa and Ma ses no to thot. An' besides Pa and Ma their men folk keeps them out of any jobs as is worth doing. For why? Cos the men want aw th' jobs for theyselves. I reckon thot bean't reet. Weel, I've talked long enough an' I've nowt more to say."

Great applause followed, with much stamping and "Kentish Fire," at the end of which Silas was heard to say, "Weel done, Sal, yo ought to be in Parliament House. But doan yo go for to get a swelled yed; yo'd be a sight if yore face was as big as yore body."

"Nay, nay Uncle Si; if it does, yo con bury me i' th' churchyard," she responded.

There was more laughter and applause at that with calls for Silas, who stood up.

A Voice, "Get thee onter t'platform, mon, so as we con see thee an' 'ear what 'ast to say."

When Silas had been half pushed and half persuaded to go on the platform, he looked round, and said, "Neaw as I am up 'ere I'll do th' best as I con, though I ain't got as long a tongue as our Sal. As to lasses arstin' lads to marry um, theer be two sides to thot. Some of yo owd uns will have 'eard tell of Jim Pie; he wur a nice quiet lad as never said a word to nobody till Judy Bunce coom an' took a fancy to him. She wur thot took up wi' him as nowt ud suit 'er but she mun wed him. She fair thrut 'ersel' on 'im an' made 'im keep company with her. Then an' obstaycle coom along. She tow'd him as he mun arst her to wed him because it wur only genteel as the mon should do the arstin'. Weel, thot suited Jim weel enough, for he didn't mean to marry her; so they kept company 'appen a year or more, an' then, just when he thowt as she wur droppin' off comfortable like, what does she do but

she schemes as her brother Jack should drop a clod on her back when she wur sitting wi' Pie on th' bench at the foot of th' stone pit. So as she mowt go off inter a swoond, yo understand, an' 'appen that ud work on Jim Pie's feelin's an' bring 'im to a conclusion.

"Weel, they got set on bench aw reet, an' Judy cruddles up agin 'im, an' he keeps slithering away from her till he gets to th' eend o' th' bench, then he gets up aw o' a suddint an' sheawts eawt as a splinter 'ad run inter 'im an' he mun go an' poo it eawt. But afore he could get away Judy seizes 'im by th' arm an' ses, 'No yo doan, my lad; not likely; just yo sit deawn aside me again. An' she pood 'im deawn onter bench. Then cooms sod an' catches 'er a gradely crump on th' back o' 'er neck. It coom thot 'ard as it knocked the idee of a swoond eawt o' 'er yed. She wur thot mad, she ses; 'Dom yore eyes, Jack, yo great blethering idiot; I'll warm yore jackit for yo when I get holt on yo, I will thot.' But before she could poo hersel' together Jim Pie 'ad slippit away, an' tale went reawnt village, an' they never kept company again.

"No, I doan holt wi' lasses arstin' th' lads to marry um, But for sod coomin' 'eavy on Judy's neck she'd 'ave 'ad Jim Pie tied oop in 'oly matrimony, she would thot; an' she'd a led 'im a dog's life if she 'ad; for you'll mind as 'ow she marrit little Sol Guddler arterwards. She made no mistake abeawt 'im. She never arst 'im to arst 'er; she'd 'ad enough of thot. She kep' her hond on 'im tight, she did thot. She'd go inter pub an' fot 'im eawt, she would thot; an' what's more she'd smack 'im weel when he'd spent more than he oughter a done or taken more till he could howd. Aw th' same, it wur an accident as saved Jim Pie; an' lads can't count on accidents to protect um from lasses as is on th' rampage same as Judy was. If I wur Prime

Minister I'd pass an act o' parliament sayin' as aw lasses should 'ave summat to do to keep um eawt o' mischief; such as working in th' mills. An' I'd 'ave it set deawn i' th' bill as aw lads as didn't want to marry should be protected agin such rampaging lasses as Judy wur. Yo kneaw th' chorus of th' owd song as wur a varygation on' Courtin' Neet——

“ ‘ She's arst me onct or twice,
I doan know what to do;
She put her arms abeawt my neck,
An' neaw I'm black an' blue.’ ”

“ No, I doan hold wi' lasses arstin' lads to marry um—I doan thot.”

After Silas sat down one or two others spoke. Then Miss Prickles answered a few questions, and Mrs. Skewgill proposed a vote of thanks to her, which was seconded by Joe Strong i' th' Arm who, in concluding, said, “ I expect, Miss Prickles, as yo bean't used to such a rough lot as we be.” Cries of, “ Speak for yoreself.” “ Weel,” he continued, “ thot's as may be, but seeing as Miss Prickles be a single lady she bean't used to our idees about courtin' an' such like, same as Sarah Broadbeam an' Silas; though Silas 'as no cause to speak, he never 'ad no trouble in keepin' lasses off 'im. Howsomedevour, Miss Prickles, doan yo mak' no mistake; we be aw reet glad to see yo, an' we hope as yo'll coom again to see us, whether yo be single or marrit. We tak it real kind o' yo to coom 'ere to-neet. We do thot.”

Miss Prickles replied suitably. She said that she thoroughly enjoyed their free speech, and acknowledged that she had learnt something from them that evening. Then Sim Shivershins proposed a vote of

thanks to their chairman or chairwoman, he didn't know which; and then, with his eye fixed on Silas, he said, "I reckon yo aw mun 'ave admired th' road as Mrs. Skewgill 'as managed to keep off drink for a whole evening, for most of yo kneaws for yoreselves as drink is difficult to keep off of an evening." Then, shaking his head at Silas, he continued, "Theer be some 'ere this evening as doan want to keep off drink——"

A Voice, "Howd thee noise, this bean't a taytotal meetin'." Other Voices, "Sit thee deawn, thou 'ast 'ad too much thyself."

The Weasel got up before Sim had recovered from this attack and seconded the vote of thanks. He concluded by asking them not to be hard on old Sim Shivershins, because he meant no harm. This roused the old man, and before the resolution was put he shouted out, "No 'arm be dommed. Yo'd better go whoam an' creep inter yore wife's tay-pot; thot's reet place for yo. I reckon she's warmt yo up many a time afore now." Before further hostilities could take place the resolution was put, and the meeting ended with much applause and laughter.

Next afternoon John Skinner visited his niece, Mrs. Broadbeam. He came earlier than he was wont to, and it was evident that there was something on his mind; but, unlike old Sim Shivershins, he settled down quietly and waited to be questioned. Mrs. Broadbeam saw that something was troubling him, and approached the matter cautiously. At last she put a leading question: "Now Ann's had time to look reawnt, Uncle John, how does she shape?"

"I dun kneaw."

"Hast owt agin her?"

"Not as I knows on."

"She's tidied up th' house, I reckon."

"Aye."

"Feeds thee weel?"

"Aye."

"Thou wurt feart as she'd talk too much, thot's 'appen what's troubling yo?"

"No, hoo doesn't talk as much as I feart."

"Theer's summat troublin' yo; I con see thot weel enough. What is it, Uncle John?"

"Her eye's troubling me; that's what's th' matter."

"What's wrong with her eye? She hasn't got a cast as I knows on. What's wrong, Uncle John?"

"Hoo looks straight enough at me, same as a sarpint mowt look at a hen as it's bound to swaller."

"Yo're gettin' narvous, Uncle John."

"May be, Sal. May be, but I'm feart as yo've interjuiced a sarpint into my nest. I am thot. Si thinks so too."

"What art feart on, Uncle John?"

"Weel, Silas and I have figured it out between us, and we suspicion as it be this road. Ann Sharples has made up her mind to wed me at th' eend of the six months. Thot's how we figure it out. Promise ends when th' six months are over, thee kneaws."

"Weel, I never did. We were a set of ninnys not to provide for that. Who'd 'ave thowt it of her. Her sister Jane at the Hall ud never do no such thing. Hast said owt to feyther abeawt it?"

"Nay, nay, Sal. We both thowt it best to keep mum and tell thee; 'appen thou const scheme an obstaycle of some sort."

"Aye, Uncle John, I'm glad yo and Uncle Silas put yore yeds together, an' I'm glad yo've said nowt to feyther; he's getting owd, an' lets things slip eawt unexpectit like. He'll likely be lookin' in for tay this

arternoon. He made a fule of hissel' at th' meetin' last night, an' th' Weasel made the most of it. 'Appen he'll be a bit tetchy when he cooms. Didst hear about meetin'?"

"Aye, I did thot. Si towd me aw abeawt it this morning. He towd me it wur th' best bit of fun he'd had for a long while. He towd me aw about yore speech, and how it gave him a chanct of telling one of his tales as a kind of pendance, picturin' out what you'd been saying; an owd tale about a lass that made a young lad court her. Was it a respectable story?"

"Aye, better than most of his stories. Why dost ask?"

"Cos I've heard him tell it different ways, but he said he varygated it to suit the occasion. Who's coming along th' loan?"

"It's feyther, I reckon; he's making a gradely noise with his stick. He allus makes twice the racket when he's in a bate abeawt summat."

"Weel, Sal, I mun be goin'."

"Nay, nay, Uncle John, yo mun stay an' help me cawt wi' him. Stay an' have a cup o' tay with us."

"Aw reet, Sal, I'll stay; but I won't say nowt till he's settled down. I ain't got no use for tempers. I doubt Ann Sharples'll have a nasty fit when she cooms agin thy obstaycle. But yo mun find one for her, Sal."

"Aye, aye; but here's feyther. Coom in, feyther; I'm reet fain to see yo walking so nippy; just like a young mon. Coom in an' set yo deawn; Uncle John's here."

"Aye, I see him; yo needn't tell me thot."

"Weel now, feyther, we'll aw set deawn comfortable an' have tay together. A cup o' tay'll do yo good."

"If yo'd stick to tay-making an' give up spouting it ud be better for aw of us, I reckon. Prancing abeawt on a platform like an elephant at a show an' talking like a wild woman or a wench as has got th' hiccups. I never thowt as a datter o' mine ud be taken silly thot road. As to my walking, I doan know as I'm walking any better than another day; theer's nowt th' matter with me as I knows on thot I shouldn't walk one day as well as another."

"Doan get aireated, feyther. I never said as yo couldn't walk one day as weel as another."

"No, but yo looked it reet enough. Yo be allus making remarks on how I walks, as if I wur an owd mon."

"Weel, feyther, thou'rt noan so young as thou wert, thee kneaws."

"Aye, I know it well enough. I never thowt as I'd live long enough to see a datter o' mine getting oop on her hind legs an' making such a lot o' dommed silly talk to a set o' fules as 'ad nowt better to do than listen to 'er."

Mrs. Broadbeam would not have been human if she had let such an opening slip. She replied readily,

"Weel, feyther, I reckon yo wur one o' th' lot."

"Aye, I wur a fule to go, thot's Bible truth. An' thot Weasel's a dommed skunk; if he turns up at th' 'Archangel' next Saturday we'll see who the fule is. I reckon Si will mak' 'im laugh on t'other side of his meawth if I can't."

"Neaw, feyther, doan yo go for to aireate yoresel'; yo'll get rheumatiz if yo do. Th' Weasel ain't worth it. Just yo leave him to Uncle Si."

"It's easy for yo to say thot. Yo doan mind making a spectaycle o' yoreself, but I does. Wheer didst go arter meeting were over? Silas and I waited for thee."

"I stayed a bit to please Susannah; she wanted to interjuice me to Miss Prickles an' it wouldn't 'ave been purlite to say no."

"Purlite! Yo be allus among chapel fowk now. Seems as yo've takken to hell fire as a duck does to watter. Purlite, indeed! Did yo think as we'd wait aw neet for yo? Nay, Sal; an' what's more I didn't coom 'ere for yo to go picking at me, an' John theer as grumpy as an owd badger. What art thinkin' on, John? Art mum or de-af?"

"I bean't neither mum nor deaf, but I be weary o' hearing yo grumblin' at nowt."

"Grumblin' at nowt! Yo doan understand; Sal be one of my childer, an' it ain't likely as I'd want to see her straying like a lost sheep eawt o' th' bosom o' th' church as I 'ad 'er brought oop in, an' going rantin' on chapel platform. Hoo'll be talking to us abeawt goin' to pubs an' threatening us wi' hell fire before hoo's done."

"Neaw, Sim, I'm getting weary. Con't yo talk o' summat else? Didst ever 'ear th' tale of th' heron an' th' eel?"

"Not as I kneaws on."

"Weel, it wur just this road. When th' heron 'ad swallowed th' eel for the third time an' it coom oop agin, th' heron said to th' eel, 'Yo may say as it's funny, but I call it dam tedious.'"

"Thot be a silly tale, John."

"Aye, lad, thot's why it matches thee."

"If I had known, John, as yo an' Sal 'ad set yore fule yeds together again me, I'd not 'ave coom in. I think I'd best be goin'."

"Neaw, feyther, tay's ready; let's talk abeawt summat else. I hear as theer's a lot being said in the village abeawt young Master Hetheridge's being at th'

'Archangel.' Seems as Weasel tow'd Susannah as yo and Uncle Silas were leading th' young mon into bad ways atween yo, an' Mr. Jobling wouldn't have 'im in his house any longer."

"Weasel be dommed, we mun put an end to his tricks. I'll see Si abeawt it afore next Saturday. But, Sal——"

"Weel, feyther?"

"Yo mind Jobling's Irish butler, as I tow'd yo abeawt?"

"Aye, feyther."

"Weel, we met him at th' pub on t'other side o' th' valley neet afore last, an' he tow'd us as Jobling an' young Master Guy 'ad a fine how-de-do. Butler wur goin' through th' wood just below Jobling's Castle, and he heard um sheawting at one another. Young mon wur on top o' th' Castle wi' Jobling's datter beside 'im, an' Jobling wur below raging like a mad bull. Butler only heard bits o' what they said, but it seems as th' young mon got aireated, an' afore they had done he tow'd Jobling to go to hell and finish painting ballroom hissel', for he'd never put no more paint on his dommed walls. What dost think o' thot, Sal?"

"Weel, feyther, butler may 'ave 'ad more till he could howd; aw th' same, theer mowt be summat in it, for th' young mon has been abeawt i' th' village o' late. Seems he wur i' th' 'Archangel' makin' a drawin' o' th' room at th' back. He's been drawin' Uncle Silas an' wants to draw yo an' me an' Uncle John. He be goin' to mak' a gradely picter afore he's done. Looks as if he's given over goin' to Jobling's, it does thot. 'Appen theer's summat in what butler ses."

"'Appen there be, Sal; Master Guy likes a bit o' fun, an' he mowt a done summat as got Jobling's

dander oop. Butler said as he'd made a big painting of th' owd Stink-o'-Brass as wur as wick as owt could be wi' his robes an' chain on. He said as he wur nowt but a gradely windbag, an' aw as he did wur to stick eawt 'is stummick an' think what a fine mon he wur, but Master Guy had sized th' owd devil oop reet enuf an' so 'ad his missus."

"Butler talks too much, feyther. Did he say owt about datter?"

"Aye, he said as she wur a gradely lass an' Master Guy couldn't keep his eyes off 'er. He'd painted a grand picter of 'er, an' butler reckoned he'd taken his time over painting her, so theer mowt 'ave been summat in what he ses abeawt owd Stink-o'-Brass catching um atop o' th' tower. Dost think as Master Guy wur running off with 'er an' owd Stink-o'-Brass 'eard of it in time an' set up an obstaycle for um?"

"I doan reetly know, feyther, but top o' Jobling's Castle 'ud be the last place as they'd seek to run to. An' Jobling's datter's a fine gal; hoo's not the sort as a young mon 'ud run off with so easy."

CHAPTER XX

INTERLUDE

"I AM afraid I prevented Roy Mackay from calling on you." The speaker was Priscilla Prickles, who was spending the afternoon with her friend, Aurora, at Goldmark Hall, a few days after their meeting in front of the town hall of Wiggleton. "He was anxious to see you," she continued, "but I think you will agree with me that under the circumstances it might have created difficulties with your father, who looked anything but pleased at your introducing Roy and Guy to Lord Newpen."

"Perhaps it is as well that you did prevent Roy from coming. I am sorry to miss seeing him but I think you were right to stop him from calling while my father is so difficult. I hope Roy won't imagine that I have no wish to see him."

Priscilla laughed and said, "You needn't trouble your head about that; he told me about your duets at Filby. You will be interested to hear that Roy has decided to join Mr. Greenwood along with James Thornton. They are to assist in the management of his Engineering Works, so we shall have Roy as a neighbour before long."

"Indeed!" Aurora remarked with surprise. "That must have been the reason why James Thornton came to Filby to see Roy that week-end when I was there. I hope his mother and sister will come with him; it

would be delightful to have them as neighbours. Do you think they will come?"

"I shouldn't wonder if they did," replied Priscilla; "they are a very devoted family. But I haven't actually heard that they mean to come and live with him."

"I suppose you know that Guy has thrown up his work here, Priscilla?"

"Yes; I was not surprised. I saw him yesterday and he told me he was making some studies of the old villagers in Tattlefold, as he intends to paint a picture of the village life there. Roy saw some of his drawings of the rooms in the 'Archangel' and a number of sketches of the villagers; he says they are excellent."

"The 'Archangel!' Isn't that the old inn opposite the church?"

"Yes, that's the one; a most picturesque old building. Like the rest of Tattlefold, it's a relic of bygone days. I have been hearing a great deal about the old folk. The other evening we had a most amusing meeting at the chapel."

"At the chapel, Priscilla!"

"Yes, Aurora, at the chapel. You don't suppose the world is made up of vicars and churchwardens, do you?"

"Don't look aggressive, Priscilla. Naturally I was surprised to hear you had a most amusing meeting in a place of worship; but then they may stand on their heads in the chapels for all I know about them."

"Really, Aurora, your ignorance is appalling. As a matter of fact, it was in the old chapel which is now used as a Sunday School and for week-day meetings. Our meeting was about Women's Rights; Mrs. Skewgill took the chair, and I introduced the subject. It

was a most amusing meeting." After describing it Priscilla went on to say, "We lose a great deal because we see so little of the workers. I had no idea that those old villagers—who have so little of what we are pleased to call education—were so shrewd, and so full of originality and humour. It was like a breath of fresh air. There was a simplicity and a downright straightforwardness about their views of life that was most refreshing. We are too much bound by convention. We put on our best clothes on Sunday, walk solemnly to church, sit upright in the pews part of the time, stand or kneel for the rest, and if a workman comes in dressed in ordinary clothes or a woman with a shawl on her head we look daggers at them, as if to say, 'Don't come near me; I had a hot bath last night, and these are my best clothes.' I wish we could get more of their neighbourly spirit into what we call our middle classes. Talk of freedom—we are all sorted out according to length, and packed head to tail like sardines, though there's very little oil about us, for that matter."

"You needn't get excited, Priscilla; you are not on the chapel platform now."

"No, Aurora, I am not. You will be interested to hear that Guy Hetheridge is a great admirer of these old villagers. He says they are not only amusing but have a delicacy of feeling that is wanting in the rich newcomers. He has even taken the trouble to pick up their dialect; he spent a whole Saturday evening with them at the 'Archangel', it seems. Mrs. Skewgill was quite upset about it; 'encouraging the old toppers,' she called it."

"Where did you see Guy, Priscilla?"

"In Tattlefold; I had been to see Mrs. Broadbeam after our meeting at the chapel. She told me there

was a great deal of gossip going on about Hetheridge's having quarrelled with your father, but I didn't ask what the gossip was."

"Did Guy say anything about it?"

"No, Aurora, he did not; but I think I can guess what happened."

"Do you, Priscilla? It is possible you might guess wrong."

"It is, Aurora; but you didn't greet each other as if you had quarrelled when you met in front of the town hall. Both your father and Lord Newpen looked extremely annoyed. I must say I did wonder at Lord Newpen's prolonged visit during your mother's illness, and I was surprised at your father's sending out your birthday dinner invitations himself, a very extraordinary proceeding. The sudden ending of Lord Newpen's visit after our meeting in front of the town hall was illuminating. Indeed, when I heard that he left next day, I concluded that another of your father's plans for your future had failed."

"You are not far wrong, Priscilla. As to Guy, my father was shockingly rude to him; he insulted him in my presence in such a way that Guy refused to work any more for him. I think Guy was quite right."

"And then, Aurora, when your father thought he had disposed of Hetheridge, he tried to bring about an engagement between you and his lordship?"

"He did, Priscilla."

"With some hope of success?"

"Yes, I think so. You see, I was obliged to entertain Lord Newpen as my father's guest while my mother was still an invalid; and, to be quite frank, I found him quite charming."

"The old serpent. He didn't look charming when we met him in front of the town hall."

"No, I don't suppose he did. I am afraid the birthday dinner disagreed with him. When he came down next morning he was irritable and looked both old and yellow. My father was so pleased with himself that he didn't notice it; indeed, he made matters worse by fidgeting him, and I couldn't do anything to prevent it."

"Did you try, Aurora?"

"Well, no; I didn't. It was such a surprise to see Lord Newpen so changed. It was really quite a shock. I had almost given in to father. He is so very persistent, and I was getting weary of always opposing him; there seemed no end to it; so I had begun to think of Lord Newpen as a possibility."

"I am not surprised, Aurora. I wonder how many possibilities you have escaped. I congratulate you on eluding his lordship. May I ask how you stand with Guy Hetheridge?"

"Certainly you may. We are to be friends."

"Friends, Aurora!"

"Yes, Priscilla. I said friends."

"Anything more?"

"Nothing more. He quite understands."

"Are you quite sure, Aurora?"

"I think so," she answered.

"When do you go abroad with your mother?"

"As soon as Dr. Oldbird thinks she will be able to go."

"Is your father going with you?"

"He means to, if possible; if not, he will join us later."

"Where do you think of going?"

"Dr. Oldbird advised us to go to Cannes and stay there awhile until mother was fit to travel. Lord Newpen suggested our driving along the coast after-

wards, past Genoa as far as Sestri, and then over to Spezia. He told us that Italian drivers can be engaged by the week or month for long tours, with a team of four horses. Father was very much taken with the idea of driving about in a coach and four. Dr. Oldbird shook his head at first; he was afraid of father's rushing about and tiring mother. He said she ought to have a maid with her and a courier as well, if we are going to tour about the country, especially as I am the only one that speaks French and Italian, and I'm not very good at Italian."

"You sing Italian songs quite well; still, a courier would be useful. What did your father think about it?"

"He's heard of a very good Italian courier married to an Englishwoman who was maid to some countess or other. He has written to a touring agency in London about them. Dr. Oldbird thought it would be best to engage both if they were satisfactory, though he was anxious that we should see them first."

"That sounds an excellent plan, Aurora, if your mother is well enough for it. But you ought to see the woman yourself; your father wouldn't be much of a judge as to her suiting your mother."

"I tried to persuade him to take me with him to see them in London, but he was annoyed, so I had to leave my mother to do what she could. I don't think she will agree to engage anyone as maid unless she feels sure about her. Dr. Oldbird wouldn't approve of it either, for that matter."

"Of course he wouldn't. I should insist on your seeing her if I were your mother. I saw Dr. Oldbird yesterday, and he seemed anxious that you should go abroad as soon as you can. I asked him, in the course of our conversation, if Lord Newpen was still in the

neighbourhood. He looked surprised at the question and said he thought I should know more about his lordship's movements than he did. I told him I knew Lord Newpen had left this house and I imagined his visit had not been successful. He looked quizzically at me, and said, 'I also gathered that his visit had been unsuccessful; permanently so, I believe.' Dr. Oldbird didn't say any more, but he seemed amused, and I think he was very glad. I know someone else who will be."

"Who do you mean, Priscilla?"

"Oh!—Why, Grandpa, of course." Then she laughed.

Aurora eyed her suspiciously, but Priscilla looked out of the window innocently and remarked: "I think the wind has changed rather suddenly; the smoke from your father's chimney is going in quite a different direction to what it was." After which she turned to Aurora with a smile, and said, "I must be going now. I am glad you are not quite heart-broken."

Grandpa had drawn his own conclusions from the sudden ending of his lordship's visit, and he took an early opportunity of questioning Aurora about it. He looked at her sharply with his little eyes and said, "Newpen's gone. Won't come back again. Eh?"

Aurora was sitting beside him and expected something of the kind. She told him what had happened. When she had finished he repeated his question. "Won't come back again. Eh?"

"I don't think so," she replied. Then, seeing that he was waiting for some further assurance, she added, "Papa quite understands."

"Umph! Glad Newpen's gone. Poor Papa's a fool. Take your time. Don't play with fire again."

As for Mr. Jobling, he was not long in recovering from his disappointment. Even he had felt repelled by the ill-humour that his lordship had made no effort to conceal, and he congratulated himself on having made no definite promise to contribute to his educational scheme. Now that was over, he turned with renewed interest to the contemplated journey. His wife had been allowed to come downstairs, and was sitting in the drawing-room one afternoon, when he entered, buoyant and irrepressible as ever.

"How well you are looking, Sophia, quite blooming! You will soon be strong again; a short rest at Cannes, and then we can start on our travels. I am going to London next week, and I will see the agent about that courier and his wife. I must have a proper understanding with them. Alderman Dauber says all couriers are rascals; they run you into all kinds of expense and you never know how much they make out of it. I almost wish I hadn't written to that agency. I think we could have managed without them."

"Yes, Josiah dear; I felt you were too impetuous. It would have been much better if you had let me go to Cannes with Aurora and my maid, and given up all idea of travelling. It is not too late to do that; I could stay there quietly for a couple of months, then return home. It would be much simpler."

"You will feel quite differently about it when you are stronger, Sophia. We mustn't trouble you about the arrangements now; when I go down to London I will arrange everything, and on my return I will tell you all about it."

"Yes, Josiah dear. I am sure you will do your best. As you are going to see the courier and his wife, there are a number of questions I wish you to ask.

Is she clean and punctual, sober and honest, quick and good-tempered? Does she attend church regularly? Does she sew well and enjoy good health? Does she know how to use the curling tongs without singeing the hair? You might ask her age and who her parents were? Is she stout and does she eat garlic? We must have at least two testimonials from well-known clergymen, preferably from a bishop and an archdeacon. Remember, I couldn't put up with a stout woman who was eating garlic all day. You won't forget?"

"You can rely on me," said the impatient and eager Jobling.

"I am glad to hear you say that, Josiah dear, for I am very anxious about committing myself to these people. I shan't be content to leave London without seeing them myself when the time comes. If I don't like the look of the courier's wife I shall take my own maid with me. Then the courier can take us to Cannes, and Aurora and the maid will stay with me there while you and the courier drive up and down Italy. I think that will be an excellent arrangement, and when you return from your travels you can tell me all about them and show me your diary; it will be very interesting."

As that was the very last thing Mr. Jobling wanted, he agreed that Aurora should go with him. This proved fortunate, for when they did visit the tourist office in London and he was introduced to the courier Signor Spaghetti Mr. Jobling was disconcerted by meeting a neatly dressed, spare, aristocratic looking Italian. Now Mr. Jobling had a deep-rooted distrust of everything foreign, and the fact that Signor Spaghetti was not only suitably dressed but clean and spoke good English only deepened that distrust.

When Signor Spaghetti regretted that he had not been told they wished to see his wife Mr. Jobling

felt that his worst suspicions were confirmed. What if Spaghetti turned out to be a member of some dangerous band of Italian banditti who would rob him, or worse still, deliver him into the hands of brigands on some lonely Italian road? Brigands who might keep him—Josiah Jobling, ex-Mayor of Wiggleson—in hungry suspense hidden in some remote cave in the Apennines until a sufficient sum had been obtained for the ransom of such an important person!

Mr. Jobling bristled with disapproval and fidgeted with anxiety while he questioned Spaghetti; he was about to demand a certificate of his marriage when Aurora, seeing that Spaghetti was sensitive, suggested that she should see his wife. This was arranged, and she had a thoroughly satisfactory talk with Mrs. Spaghetti, and obtained much useful information from her without raising the question of the curling tongs.

CHAPTER XXI

MR. JOBLING VISITS ITALY

AFTER much discussion Mr. Jobling took Dr. Oldbird's advice and agreed to stay at home until his wife was well enough to move on from Cannes. This left Aurora free to make the journey as easy as possible for her mother. They travelled by short stages and settled down at Cannes in an excellent hotel with a pleasant garden near the sea. They remained there a month, and then Signor Spaghetti returned to Dover for Mr. Jobling.

The impetuous Jobling was no easy charge even for a Spaghetti. He was very annoyed at the suggestion that he should remain below when crossing the channel, but he had to beat a hasty retreat directly the boat left the harbour, and when it reached Calais he emerged from the cabin pale and peevish. He disapproved of everything on their journey. Beginning at the *douane*, where his luggage was examined and his special cigars confiscated, he continued to grumble and find fault with the officials, the porters, their blouses, the country—in fact, with everything. For nothing was right in his opinion; and as he took every opportunity of telling Signor Spaghetti how much better they managed these things in England, that discreet individual found it best to remain in the background as much as possible.

Mr. Jobling seemed quite unable to realise that he was no longer ex-Mayor of Wiggleton, but only an

unknown traveller in a foreign country whose laws and customs he did not understand. All the tactful Spaghetti could do was to persuade him that it would be safer to air his grievances in some local English newspaper than to tell custom house officials and others that they were thieves and robbers. So at last, by tactful persuasion and numerous tips, the discreet Spaghetti succeeded in delivering the indignant and suspicious Jobling safe into the arms of his wife at Cannes.

A few days later they set out for Nice in a roomy carriage drawn by four horses, while the Spaghetti went by train with the luggage. The weather was fine, and even Mr. Jobling was quite happy and contented; he enjoyed rattling through the narrow paved streets of the villages and seeing the inhabitants fly when they heard the crack of the driver's long whip.

In those days the Riviera was very different from what it is now. The roads were rough, but they were free from the noise and dust of the motor-buses and cars that make that tourist-ridden shore unbearable. Hotels were few and drainage was scanty, but the influenza germs had not found a happy hunting-ground there, nor had the natural beauties of the olive-clad slopes running down to the sea been destroyed by the erection of countless villas. It was still a beautiful and a desirable country.

After spending a few days at Nice the Joblings set out again in their coach and four. For the ascent of the Corniche two extra horses were hitched on in front with their driver walking beside them; also, to Mr. Jobling's disgust, a strong young donkey was hooked on at the side. A young donkey! Controlled only by the coachman's long whip! Shades of Goldmark Hall! As Mr. Jobling insisted on sitting beside the driver it was fortunate that he could not speak

Italian, but had to employ Aurora to express his disapproval of the proceedings. This she did without anyone knowing that she was acting as censor as well as interpreter. She had never enjoyed a drive so much, and for a time the Chimneys of Tattleton and the worries of Goldmark Hall were forgotten; even the occasional duty of translating her father's violent remarks about the behaviour of the young donkey was amusing.

When they reached the top of the pass the extra horses and the donkey were sent back. The day was clear, and the wide view actually drew a note of approval from the critical Jobling, though he said the snowclad mountains to the north looked cold and unseasonable.

They settled down for a time at Mentone. One morning a burly individual with a face coloured like a radish came up to Mr. Jobling and smote him heartily on the back. "Hello, Jobling. Come here to break the bank at Monte Carlo. Eh?—Sly dog, Jobling. Knows a thing or two. Brought wife and daughter with him to keep up appearances. Churchwarden, Mayor of Wiggleton and Justice of the Peace, you know, all correct *en famille*. Ha, ha! Good, very good! Pillar of the church must not let cat out of bag. Hey?"

Now Mr. Jobling was proudly conscious that there was no cat in his bag to let out, and had his acquaintance been any other than Colonel Bulger he would have resented the imputation. But Colonel Bulger was the head of an old county family, and chairman of an important Company which Mr. Jobling had assisted to float, much to their mutual advantage; so Mr. Jobling smiled weakly, and even simulated amusement when the Colonel proceeded to tell him objectionable stories devoid of any real wit. He listened to a long account of the Colonel's gains and losses at Monte Carlo. He also maintained a discreet silence

as to his own visit, and allowed the Colonel to imagine that he had been very successful at the tables owing to a secret system which guaranteed him from loss, although, as a matter of fact, he had risked little and lost what he risked.

Mrs. Jobling disliked the Colonel, and as he was most persistent in his attentions to Aurora she determined to leave Mentone. This she effected by filling her husband's mind with fears of typhoid if their journey was delayed until the hot weather; so they left soon after this and drove on to Alassio.

There was only one hotel there, a rambling inn on the edge of the level sandy beach. On their arrival Mr. Jobling went sniffing round and expressed strong disapproval of the drainage; so next day they drove on to the town of Savona and put up at another old inn, a commercial one this time. Here Mr. Jobling had ample cause for sniffing, and Mrs. Jobling found her ruse had been only too successful; for he insisted on driving on to Spezia, with only two nights on the way, and then he hurried her on direct by rail to Florence.

Here at last Mr. Jobling felt he was in the Mecca of the Art World; not only had Ruskin written about it, but Alderman Dauber had visited it. So it was only fitting that he, Alderman Jobling, should form his own opinion of the Art Treasures there. His wife encouraged this enthusiasm, for she wished to settle down there and enjoy the comfortable sitting-room that had been engaged for them in the best hotel overlooking the Arno.

At first Aurora accompanied her father when he sallied forth Baedeker in hand; but Signor Spaghetti proved a more helpful companion, for he studied his Jobling most carefully; and, though he found him almost as troublesome as a spoilt child, yet he

looked upon him as one out of whom he might suck no small advantage!

Now, Mr. Jobling had consulted Alderman Dauber about his ballroom after Hetheridge left, and had decided to cover its walls with pictures of his own choosing, pictures that would do credit to his own individual taste. He had already settled with the architect about Hetheridge's work, and had agreed that the portraits of Aurora and himself should be sent up to the Royal Academy; then, if they were accepted, he would pay whatever price a certain arbitrator should fix when the exhibition was over. This he had done all the more readily because Alderman Dauber had seen the portraits and had laughed at the idea of their being accepted by the Hanging Committee.

Bearing in mind that Mr. Jobling's ballroom was designed for the display of pictures, and that he was second only to Alderman Dauber as official guardian of the public taste for art in Wiggleton, it may be imagined how seriously Mr. Jobling set about forming a correct opinion of the masterpieces of Florence. The workings of the mind of this remarkable man were faithfully reflected in his diary. His various impressions were as carefully recorded as if he had been entering up a journal or posting a ledger. Had he been asked to present a concise summary and a general valuation of the paintings, he would have written down the frescoes in the Spanish Chapel, in Santa Croce and in San Marco as scrap because they were not portable and saleable like pictures; after all they were mere colour wash. Money invested in pictures was realisable, so he confined himself to the study of them.

Relying on his own indubitable taste, accompanied by the assiduous Spaghetti and guided by the stars

of Baedeker, he inspected the chief works of Raphael, Guido Reni, Andrea del Sarto, Titian, and one or two others. Finally he examined copies of these; and, having judged them at least equal to the originals in every respect and far superior in brilliancy of colour, he ended by purchasing a dozen of them, chiefly pictures of Madonnas so as to secure that uniformity of pattern which his acute perception deemed necessary for the decoration of his ballroom. Signor Spaghetti felt the time had not been wasted.

Having completed these purchases Mr. Jobling decided that it was time to leave Florence, and he proposed to return home by the St. Gothard after paying a short visit to the lakes *en route*. The day before they left, Aurora received a letter from Flora Mackay; she was sitting with her mother when she opened this. It ran thus:

“DEAREST AURORA,

“I was indeed glad to hear what a perfectly delightful drive you had beside that most lovely Levantine coast; your charming description of it made me quite envious. How I longed to be there! And now! When you get this letter every hour spent amid the glories of Florence must be more wonderful than the last. I can but faintly imagine the supreme joy of inhaling the spiritual aroma of the great masters, amongst whose immortal works you are now wandering free in that city of pearl set amidst the azure mountains of Italy.

“But these words of mine must seem poor and cold to you, whose very soul is vibrating in harmony with those great master spirits, and though I fear to break in on your Elysium with more mundane affairs, yet it is possible that you may be interested to hear that Roy has persuaded my mother to have her portrait painted. And who do you think he has chosen to paint her? Guess first—then turn over the page and see—Guy

Hetheridge! Yes, it is Guy! He is so perfectly delightful, so light-hearted and altogether charming. So serious, too, in his love of art. It is wonderful how understanding he is; he seems to divine the very essence of my mother's spirit and he set it down on canvas so subtly and so sweetly. The only way I can account for such a miracle is his perfect sympathy with us all in our simple home surroundings. My mother said to me the other day, 'He might be a second son in the house; how your father would have enjoyed talking with him about this art which we all love so well.' But you will not be surprised at this, dearest Aurora, for you know Guy so much better than we do; still, however glad Guy may feel at being no longer obliged to waste his great gifts on the ballroom at Goldmark Hall, you must surely regret his quarrel with your father.

"And now, dearest Aurora I must conclude somewhat hurriedly, as I am taking Guy to Puffin's Bill to show him the sea birds. You will remember how we watched the gulls there and you said how glorious to be as free as they—I feel like that this morning, the spring is in the air, it speaks to me of Italy—but I must not keep Guy waiting any longer. With all good wishes and much love from my mother and myself, and *friendly* greetings from Guy,

"Dearest Aurora, I shall ever remain,

"Your most devoted and loving friend,

"FLORA MACKAY."

After reading this, Aurora said to her mother: "Flora Mackay tells me that Guy Hetheridge is painting her mother's portrait; it seems her brother Roy wished him to do it."

Mrs. Jobling looked puzzled, and then remarked, "I wonder why they chose him to do it?"

"I suppose because Roy and he are schoolfellows. Flora writes most enthusiastically about the portrait."

"Your father doesn't think much of his work."

"Does father know much about it?"

"I don't know, dear. He thinks he does, but I must say the portrait of him struck me as excellent. Don't you think it is?"

"Yes, mother, I do. Everyone who sees it does. Even Priscilla, who wished to be critical, had to allow that it was. There is no doubt it is very like father."

"Yes, it is most certainly. You know that obstinate look which your father has when he wants to get his own way; I think Mr. Hetheridge has caught it perfectly."

"Father generally does want his own way."

"Well, yes, dear, I think he does. Most men do, but it has become a second nature with him. It is better not to oppose him unless it is quite necessary. Since he joined us at Cannes we have had to go just when and where he wishes; yet he really thinks he is considering us. It's very curious."

"Yes, it is—most curious." Then, after hesitating a moment, Aurora added: "He was very determined that I should marry Lord Newpen. He was so persistent that I almost gave way to his wishes."

"If Lord Newpen had actually asked you to marry him would you have consented?"

"No, mother. Certainly not! Not after what I saw of him that last day. Perhaps it is as well that you should know that I have made up my mind never to allow myself to be placed in such a position again. It might make matters easier at home if father would understand that without my being obliged to oppose him every time."

"I am afraid, my dear, it's no use my talking to him. If I had opposed him long ago it might have been different, but now I have very little influence with him."

"Was he like that when you married him?"

"I really hardly know. You see, I was young then and he wasn't so very much older. All his time was spent away from home on business, and I was occupied looking after the house. I suppose I never thought much about it."

"Ah!" exclaimed Aurora, "I expect that's not unusual. It's only later on that people find out."

Mrs. Jobling hardly did herself justice when she said she had so little influence with her husband, for she generally managed to circumvent him when she wished. Now Mr. Jobling did not want to spend much time at the Italian lakes but she did, and as she knew that he was determined to drive over the St. Gothard she laid her plans accordingly. She talked the matter over with Spaghetti's wife, and they decided to fill Mr. Jobling's mind with fears of sudden snow-storms which might expose them to the risk of avalanches if they attempted to cross the pass before the latter part of May. In this way she achieved her object.

Towards the end of their stay at the lakes Aurora was reading an English newspaper when she came across the following—"Two of the most remarkable portraits in this year's Academy are by a young artist named Guy Hetheridge who is exhibiting for the first time. One is that of Alderman Jobling, ex-Mayor of Wiggleton, the other that of his daughter, Miss Aurora Jobling. The portrait of the alderman is painted in a brilliant and dashing manner. The ex-Mayor seems to be stepping out of the canvas with an excess of complacent self-assertion. He is grasping a casket—which we understand contains the freedom of Wiggleton—with an almost predatory determination; and the restless little eyes seem to follow the observer. The painting has all the swashbuckling spirit of a Franz

Hals. The portrait of his daughter, which hangs upon the same wall, is a striking contrast to that of the alderman. Though equally vivid, it is far more delicately painted, the expression being very subtly conveyed by gradation of colour and fine brush stroke modelling. The result is a most intriguing picture of a very beautiful woman which cannot fail to interest a wide public. These portraits alone would make this year's exhibition a memorable one."

Aurora called her mother's attention to this passage, and she in turn showed it to her husband. When he had read it he threw the paper down impatiently and said, "I wonder who's at the bottom of that; I must talk to my architect about it. Of course, it's absurd. Alderman Dauber, who is an excellent judge, didn't think much of the portraits."

"Is he such an excellent judge?"

"Alderman Dauber an excellent judge! Of course, he is."

"You think so, dear, but then, you are on the Council with him. Everyone else who has seen those portraits thinks them remarkably good. I know you say it is only a matter of taste, but it never struck me that Alderman Dauber was a man of singularly good taste."

"You don't understand, Sophia."

"Perhaps not, Josiah, but do you suppose a leading newspaper would employ anyone who did not know what he was writing about to criticise the pictures in the Royal Academy?"

"You don't understand, Sophia."

"You have said that before, Josiah dear, but would you ask anyone to give you a legal opinion who hadn't made a special study of the law? How much did you pay Mr. Hetheridge for those pictures?"

"The price isn't fixed yet."

"How are you going to fix it?"

"It is to be settled by arbitration when the exhibition is over. I wish we had arranged it at once, but Alderman Dauber laughed at the idea of the portraits being passed by the Hanging Committee."

"Do you think the Hanging Committee were wrong, dear?"

"Really, Sophia, you are very persistent and tiresome. Of course, everyone is liable to make mistakes, and in this case Alderman Dauber does seem to have been wrong."

"I am glad, Josiah, to hear you acknowledge that; another time I hope you will take expert advice."

"Of course, it's easy to say that now. It was a mistake, and I am afraid I shall have to pay heavily for it."

"You can afford to, Josiah; and if I were you I should not grudge Hetheridge what is due to him. He is a very nice young man and I am sorry you were so rude to him."

"Rude to him!"

"Yes, Josiah dear. Very rude. Unnecessarily rude. You would have it that Aurora intended to marry him. You were so unreasonable about it that you were rude to him, and tried to hurry her into an engagement with Lord Newpen. Aurora and Grandpa told me all about it. The sooner you make up your mind to give up attempting to influence her in such matters the better it will be for all of us. You have opened her eyes, and she will never allow you to put her into such a disagreeable position again."

"Disagreeable?"

"Yes, Josiah. Disagreeable. Most disagreeable. You made yourself a laughing-stock."

"Laughing-stock?"

"Yes, dear. Laughing-stock. If you hadn't been so headstrong you might have remained friends with Guy Hetheridge. Now he has proved such a remarkably promising artist you may be sorry that you have lost a great opportunity of appearing as the distinguished art-patron who discovered a genius. Some day Hetheridge may be President of the Royal Academy."

The last sentence sank deep into Mr. Jobling's mind, as indeed his wife had intended it should; he began to regret his treatment of Hetheridge.

Mrs. Jobling told her daughter about this conversation, and took the opportunity of asking her, "If your father had encouraged Guy Hetheridge, would you have been so ready to discourage him? You admit you like him."

Aurora replied, without any hesitation, "I liked Guy very much. Of course, father's attitude made our relations very difficult, but in any case I couldn't have helped Guy in his career as an artist."

"I don't know that; you might have helped him in his career, though you might not have been able to help him with his art."

"I am not so sure about that," Aurora replied. "He looks at art in a way that we can hardly understand. Besides, there is no use thinking about it now."

"Why not, dear?"

"Because I shan't be in the least surprised to hear from Flora Mackay that she is engaged to him."

"Do you intend to marry, Aurora?"

"I don't know, mother. It won't break my heart if I don't."

Shortly after this conversation they joined their Italian coachman by arrangement at Bellinzona, and he drove them over the St. Gothard Pass. They stayed a day or two at Lucerne in order to go up the Rigi, then

went on to Paris where Mr. Jobling wished to stay in order to look at the pictures in the Louvre. Signor Spaghetti produced a smart looking Frenchman to act as Mr. Jobling's guide, one who was posted up in French art and knew the galleries well. Unfortunately when going round the Louvre Mr. Jobling considered it an insult to England that there should be so many pictures of French victories, and at last he grew so indignant about it that he said to his guide, "Hey, Froggy, where's Waterloo?"—and though the Frenchman treated him with admirable tact, Mr. Jobling took such a dislike to French art and French customs that even the discreet Spaghetti was glad when their stay in Paris was over.

While they were still in Paris Aurora received a long letter from Flora Mackay, which began;

"DEAREST AURORA,

"I am afraid I wrote hurriedly and expressed myself badly, for you seem to have gathered from what I said that Hetheridge and I might possibly become something more than friends. I admit I was attracted by his pleasant manner, but my first impressions of him were only superficial. You will have heard of his successful début at the Royal Academy, how his portraits have actually been spoken of as one of the attractions of the Exhibition. I hope it will not turn his head, but I am afraid it has filled him with great ideas. I hear from my brother, who is now in Tattleton, that Hetheridge is hard at work on two large oil-paintings for next year's Academy. One is a landscape with Tattlefold Church in the foreground and the Chimneys of Tattleton at the back, the other is a scene in the 'Archangel' with old Lancashire folk gathered round the fire.

"He is staying at Tattle Hall just now and is completely taken up with Tattlefold and its inhabitants. I am afraid he is reckoning on another success with his

pictures next year. I hope he won't be disappointed. It would be a terrible blow for him if they were rejected.

"And now I must tell you, Roy has taken such a dear little house on your side of Tattleton not more than a mile from Goldmark Hall. Mother and I are going to settle him in, so we shall hope to see a great deal of you then. Etc., etc."

Several sheets followed covered with various matters of minor interest, but the letter ended with this cryptic saying: "When we meet we can compare our impressions and experiences of the young artist, and also of his intentions and opportunities."

Mr. Jobling was again unfortunate in crossing the channel. As the train drew near the sea-coast he noticed with trepidation that the wind was ruffling the surface of the water pools and bending the poplar trees ominously. When he went on to the boat at Calais he needed no cautionary advice from the thoughtful Spaghetti but went below with his wife without a word. Aurora remained on deck and found a seat in a sheltered place near one of the paddle-wheels. She had not been seated there long when a large, elderly man in a rough weather cloak sat down beside her. It was the Professor.

When their eyes met he exclaimed, "Soh! We are not strangers, I think, though it is some times since we did meet. I have been in Germany and did come back through France. And you?"

"I have been in Italy with my father and mother; they have gone below."

"I think I did see him come beside the steamship. They will be more comfortable underneath if the big seas do make somethings for them. But you? You do like the sea. Is it not so?"

"Yes. I like to feel the fresh wind and the salt spray on my face."

"Ach, yes. It is very fine. I do also like it. So you have been in Italy? Roy Mackay who has joined himself to Mr. Greenwood with James Thornton to make the engines in Tattleton did say you were there. Did you like it much?"

"In some ways I did—very much. I enjoyed driving along the Riviera and I liked being in Florence, but I was not as much interested in the picture galleries as I ought to have been. I liked the frescoes better; there was something very attractive about San Marco with its beautifully quaint frescoes and old-world air. My father was disappointed at my want of interest in the pictures, but we always seem to differ in our tastes."

The Professor smiled benignly, but a little imp whispered in his ear and he could not resist saying, "It is not often that a man so busy as your father has the time to study the art." To which Aurora replied, "I don't think either of us knows much about art of any kind."

"But," the Professor objected, "I have heard you sing the solos at the Choral Society's concert in Wiggleton; you have a fine soprano and do sing very well. Surely you do love the music? Is it not so?"

"Yes, I do really; but I don't know that I enjoy either singing or playing to those who look on music as a drawing-room accomplishment. Most of the people I meet prefer sentimental ballads and humorous songs to good music."

"Ach, yes," the Professor agreed. "Such people make nothings, they do not know the love of music; but there are others, like myself, who do know something about music and are happy when they do hear it good. Nevertheless, you are right when you do

say it is difficult to play the music you love when you do know those who listen do not care for it. Even the great artist does gain somethings from the sympathy of his audience. You must come to my house, then we shall have some music together; I do know your good friend, the Miss Prickle, she shall come with you. The Miss Prickle does interest me; we have much argument. I do not quite agree with her about the Women's Right; nevertheless, there is somethings in what she does say."

"I think she is right in many things," Aurora remarked. "Few men understand how burdensome the restraints of convention are on women, especially on young unmarried women. As soon as a girl leaves school she is expected to make a good match, it is considered her duty; if she remains unmarried she is generally obliged to devote her life to trivialities."

"Soh! There is somethings in that; nevertheless, do not forget the home is the birthplace of the nation, and the woman is the centre of the home which does revolve round her like the earth does revolve round the sun. In England you do pride yourself on your home; so also the Scottish people do, and they educate and train their young better than you do. So also we in Germany do; we think much of the home. No, no, you must never forget that the discipline and the love of the home is the safeguard of humanity. It is, therefore, I do not quite agree with the Miss Prickle. Too much freedom for the quite young girl might upset somethings. When I did argue with the Miss Prickle, Mistress Mackay and her son were also at my house. Mistress Mackay she did say little and her son did say many things, but I think she did agree with me. She said she did know you quite well. I think she is a very nice lady; I did also like her son."

Aurora agreed that they were nice people, but added, "Much as I admire Mrs. Mackay, I think she is rather old-fashioned in her ideas. I don't altogether agree with her views about women. She was unusually fortunate in her marriage, so she thinks marriages are made in heaven. I saw a very different side to that when I was working in the hospital at Wiggleton. I saw a very sad side. Some of the happenings in the neighbourhood were deplorable."

"Ach, soh! The little God Cupid does make some very bad shootings, especially amongst the crowds in the slums. I did hear somethings about you from my good friend Dr. Oldbird; he did say you worked well, but he was afraid you did take it somethings too seriously. Is it not so?"

"Perhaps I did, though I think it was reading Darwin and Strauss that disturbed me most; Strauss especially. After reading his life of Jesus I found it difficult to find firm ground from which to look round on life."

"Soh, you also do read. It is not often the young lady does read. But, Strauss! He does expect to find all the history cut in the stone like the ten commandments. Nevertheless, the teaching of Christianity does remain—God the Father, the Creator Spirit that is present everywhere, creating and sustaining all things.—'In us all, in our neighbour as in ourselves.'—'To Whom we owe all.'—'All men are one family.'—'Therefore they should love one another.'—It is very simple, but it is very difficult to live up to."

"Very!" said Aurora. "Indeed, it seems quite impossible to love some of the wrecks of humanity that one sees in our great towns."

"That is so. The Christ life is most difficult. Still, we can all try and do somethings; and it is good that we have the ideal, it is very fine. It is the one

big lamp to light the world; it does throw its light even on the evil."

Aurora hesitated a moment, then asked him, "Why does God permit such evil if He is all powerful and good?"

"Ach! but you do ask me the one big question. My dear young lady, we must be content not to know everythings. You have worked in the hospital. Take the pain: it is not good, nevertheless the pain of self-sacrifice is quite other things. There is somethings in this; I do not know altogether what it is, but the self-sacrifice does seem like the Philosopher's Stone, it is able to turn the evil into the good. Think of the mother's pain for the child. Is it not possible that the Creator has pain in creating, yet has the greater joy in it? Some people who have had much pain have felt themselves greatly drawn to the Creator. I sometimes do think that the evil is only the back currents close to the banks of the river of life, nevertheless the river itself does flow on. Also, without the evil there would be no strength to resist.

"You are quite right to read and to think of these things for yourself; most young ladies do only read the novels. It is bad to leave the religion to the priests who do make troubles with their creeds. Look through their spectacles, then put them down and look at the life itself; you will find that the education and the superstition cannot live together; also, in the north countries the peoples are too practical for the priests and the superstitions. Nevertheless for you I would say, do not take the life so serious; it would be a sad world if all the birds did stop singing. But we are close to the white cliffs of Dover; we must speak about these things when you do see me at my house. I do like to see those white cliffs, for they do

talk to me of my home where I do live in Tattlefold with all my family round me. Do not forget to come with the Miss Prickle to see me at my house."

One of the first things that Mr. Jobling did on arriving in England was to see his architect, who convinced him that Hetheridge's success was undoubted, and as Mr. Jobling also called to mind what his wife had said about the advantage of being the patron of a rising young artist, he determined to extend the olive-branch. He wrote accordingly:

"MY DEAR MR. GUY HETHERIDGE,

"You will doubtless be interested to hear that I have returned safely from Florence and, having availed myself of its unique opportunities for extending and perfecting my knowledge of art, I indulged my admiration of what is most noteworthy by an exhaustive examination of the masterpieces of that great emporium. I was so filled with appreciation that I bought one dozen perfect specimens of the choicest gems, facsimiles which I compared with the originals and found perfect in every respect, which indeed surpass the somewhat faded originals in richness and variety of colouring.

"I am now writing to ask you to favour me with your presence, for I should be gratified to hear your opinion on my choice. I feel certain you will agree with me that any little misunderstanding we may have had may well be forgotten

"Believe me,

"My dear Mr. Hetheridge,

"Faithfully yours

"JOSIAH JOBLING."

CHAPTER XXII

TATTLEFOLD AGAIN

TOWARDS the end of March Mrs. Broadbeam was busy tidying up ready for tea when the door opened suddenly and let Susannah in with a mighty blast of wind. "Goodness gracious me," exclaimed Mrs. Broadbeam, "what flea's bit you now? Coom in an' shut th' door afore we be aw blown inside eawt." Then, seeing that Susannah was both excited and distressed, she added, "Just yo sit yo down an' tell me aw about it. I can see as summat uncommon has gone wrong wi' yo. Neaw, Susannah, what is it?"

"Sarah Broadbeam, Dorcas has been taken suddenly ill. I don't know what is the matter with her, and I don't know what to do. Skewgill is terribly upset; Dorcas was so horribly convulsed that he was persuaded that the Devil had entered into her and was tearing her. I don't know what to do."

"Yo should have sent for th' doctor; thot's what yo ought to have done."

"I did. I sent Skewgill for him, but he came back again saying the doctor was out."

"If Dorcas is reel bad as yo say, Skewgill should have followed up th' doctor an' not rested till he found him."

"That's exactly what I did tell him, Sarah; but all he said to me was, 'This is the Lord's doing, He willed it so.' When they told him the Doctor was out he

said he felt the Spirit move within him, and it was revealed to him that the Devil had entered into Dorcas and he must return forthwith to cast the devil out or the child would surely die. He really thinks Dorcas is possessed by the Devil. He tried to prevent me coming for you, but I didn't know what else to do, Sarah."

"Weel, Susannah, I never heard such a pack of nonsense in all my born days! I never had no patience with that kind of talk. Skewgill's reet enough i' th' pulpit; but set him to look arter a sick child an' he's no better than a luny." And, throwing a shawl over her head, Mrs. Broadbeam sallied forth with Susannah.

They found Skewgill at the bedside. He rose from his knees with a strange look of exaltation on his pale face and greeted them with tense excitement. "My prayer hath been heard; the child liveth," he said.

Mrs. Broadbeam paid no attention to him, but went up to the bed and looked anxiously at Dorcas who was lying still and pallid in a state of utter exhaustion. Then she turned to Susannah and said, "I reckon from what you have told me that Dorcas has had a fit."

Skewgill broke in impatiently. "I tell you she was possessed by the Devil, and I have cast him out by prayer. As the Scripture saith, 'This kind cometh not out save by prayer and fasting'."

Mrs. Broadbeam took no notice; she only said, "She's fair tired to death, an' if yo doan mind, Susannah, she'll catch her death yet. The room's too cold for her." And wrapping Dorcas up in a blanket she carried her down to the kitchen and sat down with her on her knee in front of the fire. Then she turned to Skewgill. "Just yo go an' get her little bed an' fot it down here i' th' warm room, an' doan go moon-

ing about like a lost soul. An' yo, Susannah, just yo go an' get a couple of bricks an' hot um up i' th' oven an' wrap um reawnt an' reawnt wi' flannel, an' we'll put Dorcas in bed wi' a brick to her feet an' a brick to her stummick, thot's what we mun do.

"Neaw, Skewgill, are yo goin' for that bed or are yo not? It's no use yore blethering abeawt th' Devil being inside or outside o' Dorcas; she's just had a fit, an' fits is mostly stummick. Fit's over, but her innards have been wratched reel bad, an' she's gone deadly cold an' aw, thanks to yore wasting time in praying instead o' doin'." Then, seeing Skewgill didn't go, she turned on him and said, "Didn't I tell yo to go an' fot bed deawn? Doan stond staring theer like a struck moon-calf. Just yo go for to do what I tell yo, an' be sharp about it, or I'll tell aw the folk in the village as yo did yore best to kill Dorcas. I will thot. Off with yo! Sharp!" And Skewgill slunk off like a whipped dog with its tail between its legs.

Susannah was greatly shocked, and said, "Sarah Broadbeam, may the Lord forgive you, you have hurt Skewgill dreadfully."

"Not I, Susannah. He wanted wakkening up. Yo should give him the rough side of yore tongue when he turns silly like thot."

After the bed was brought in, Mrs. Broadbeam, who was now mistress of the situation, said to Skewgill, "Just yo go for to fot doctor here as soon as yo con. Yo con pray as much as yo like arterwards. Casting out devils, I never heard o' such a thing! An' Dorcas nigh to death's door wi' cold! Yo're no more fit to look arter a child than a luny from the Asylum."

Sarah was so filled with indignation and contempt at his want of sense that she continued to protest after he had gone. "I never did see such a fule of

a mon. Yo can't get it out of his silly head but what he's been casting a devil out of Dorcas. He'd a let her die of cold, he would thot. We was only just in time, I reckon. I'm expecting when doctor cooms he'll give Dorcas summat as'll stir her innards up; aw as we con do is to keep her warm till he does. I reckon she's not strong, an' we mun try nowt on her without him."

When the old Doctor came he confirmed Mrs. Broadbeam's diagnosis, and said he would send them some medicine. Skewgill began to protest, but the Doctor—who had already heard his account of what had taken place—cut him short by saying, "Mrs. Broadbeam did the right thing. If the child had been left to you it would have died of exhaustion. You talked some nonsense to me about faith removing mountains and casting out devils. I said nothing because I saw you were very upset and unnaturally excited; but now I will give you a text for your next sermon, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' The Creator gave us brains and intends us to use them; if we don't, so much the worse for us. Next time your child is ill don't give way to this kind of excitement. Keep calm and come to me. If I'm out, see if my young partner is in. Don't rest till you get a doctor. Your child isn't very strong, but this is evidently the first fit she has had. I hope it will be the last. Now, mind! You mustn't disturb her. If you want to pray, do so quietly to yourself. I will come again to-morrow to see how she is." And after giving some further instructions he departed.

Th' Owd Doctor, as he was called in Tattlefold, was really almost as anxious about Skewgill as he was about Dorcas. He remembered hearing of a meeting when Skewgill's congregation had presented him with

“a silver tay-pot wi’ a bit o’ brass intil it”, and Skewgill, in returning thanks, had told them how the Devil tempted him with drink and he had only escaped after a terrible struggle. The Old Doctor didn’t like religious excitement any more than he approved of the faith-healing craze. He had seen the harm done to patients in hospital by well-meaning people who spoke to them about their souls when the saving of their bodies should have been the first consideration.

On his way home he called on his young partner and asked him if he would be willing to give a course of ambulance lectures at the chapel. He thought it would be good not only for Skewgill but also for the workpeople, especially for the colliers who were liable to accidents of all kinds. He thought if Skewgill took it up and got a few firemen and datallers to come the lectures would be a success, and nothing could be better for Skewgill himself than a practical interest of that kind.

In the evening the Doctor went to smoke a pipe with the Vicar. When they were seated comfortably in front of the fire, each with a glass of whisky beside him and a long clay in his hand, they compared notes about the inhabitants of Tattlefold, and the older part of Tattleton where Skewgill held forth. The Doctor told the Vicar about Dorcas, and went on to say, “The whole affair would have been laughable if it hadn’t bordered so closely on the tragic, for I believe if Dorcas had died Skewgill would have gone off his head altogether. I never saw a man so tense with excitement; he talked to me as if he was in a trance. He hardly knew what he was saying. I just let him run on as long as I could.”

“He’s a strange man,” said the Vicar. “He’s a clever man in many ways. As the Professor said,

he's a kind of religious genius. They tell me he has a most extraordinary power over his congregation."

"So I understand," said the Doctor. "He has a vivid imagination, and likes to make their flesh creep. He certainly manages to imbue them with a wholesome fear of the Devil and Hell Fire. No doubt he exercises some kind of mesmeric power over them; at the same time he often loses control over himself and talks extravagantly."

"He's not as matter-of-fact as we are," replied the Vicar. "For that reason, we are perhaps hardly able to judge him. He has done a great deal of good down in Tattleton, and he manages to get hold of some of the roughest men there. You have just seen the weakest and most unreasonable side of him. It's a common saying that genius is akin to madness."

"If you had seen him to-day, as I have," said the Doctor. "You wouldn't have been so ready to find excuses for him. It was a piece of luck that Mrs. Broadbeam got there in time to save his child's life. People who are subject to extreme fits of nervous excitement are difficult to handle. I was sorely tempted to round on him to-day, but it is so easy to say too little or too much. I must caution Mrs. Broadbeam. She can manage the children, but she has little understanding or sympathy for the weakness of an excitable temperament like Skewgill's. I think the ambulance class may help him. When he's learnt something about broken bones he won't expect to mend them with prayer. Those who profess to perform miracles fight shy of broken bones."

"I agree with you to a certain extent," said the Vicar; "but I am perhaps more ready to admit the value of his fiery religious zeal, even if it is mixed with absurdity. It is also possible that I realise the

dangers of such a state of mind even more than you do. If I were you I should be very careful not to destroy his faith in himself, to say nothing about the danger of shaking his faith in religious matters."

"Faith should be reasonable," the Doctor asserted.

"I am not so sure of that," the Vicar replied. "My father, as you know, was a man of science and I think I have inherited his questioning disposition. I lack the power that comes from an unquestioning faith."

"I don't agree with you," said the Doctor. "Unquestioning faith only imposes on the ignorant and encourages superstition. I am inclined to agree with the Professor that the new industrial population will prove too practical to accept such teaching. When they are properly educated they will have little use for the old formulas and creeds. The more virile part of the population already look on forms and ceremonies as mere play-acting. You understand these people far better than most of the younger clergy do."

"It is true that I understand the older people," the Vicar replied; "for I am used to the old folks and I know their ways. They are old friends; I like them and I know they like me. But with the young it is different, they need a younger man to lead them. I do not interest them, I fear."

"You should get your curate to preach for you oftener."

"My curate has plenty to do at the mission church in Tattleton. I don't think it would be fair to put more on him. I am getting old and I am beginning to feel that I ought to resign."

"Nonsense, Tim. The Bishop would put in one of his 'Pisky, pisky, Amen, Doun on your knees and up again' fellows, as we called them in Scotland. He doesn't understand the Lancashire folk. Your first

curate was one of that sort, and he did no good here. The Lancashire industrial folk are a hard-headed, self-reliant lot. As to your resigning, Tattlefold wouldn't be Tattlefold without you."

"We all think like that," said the Vicar, "yet the world would go on just as well without us."

"Ask the Professor," the Doctor suggested. "He would say, 'Ach no, that is but foolishness.'"

They both laughed and then the Vicar remarked, "The Professor is so young in mind that he hardly understands what it is to feel old; besides, he is a very loyal friend." After taking a couple of pulls from his pipe, the Vicar added, "But for his learning one would think of him as a big boisterous child, yet we owe a great deal to him—you and I."

After a few more puffs the Vicar asked the Doctor if he had seen Jim Thornton's old school-fellow, Roy Mackay, who was to join Jim at the Engineering Works.

"Yes, I have," the Doctor answered. "I like the look of him, he seems an intelligent young fellow with plenty of ideas and energy. I think he'll run well in harness with Jim. I suppose you have heard that Guy Hetheridge has gone to Filby to paint Mrs. Mackay's portrait? The Squire will miss him."

"I am sure he will," the Vicar agreed. "But Hetheridge will be coming back again before long; he hasn't finished his work here. Silas tells me he means to make several more drawings of the old folk. He hasn't finished at the 'Archangel' yet. I never really understood how he got across with Mr. Jobling."

"No more did I, Tim; but then, I never could understand how he came to undertake that work for Jobling of all people. I suppose you know there's been a lot of gossip in the village about their quarrel.

Silas started telling me about it, and I cut him short, so he looked at me like an owl with his head on one side and said, 'Yo be but a single mon same as I be, but I reckon yo have had as much to do with the buryings in Tattlefowt as I have, an' yo know as much about th' living as I do. An' what's more, yo know weel enough if theer's a rumpus anywheer theer's allus a woman at th' bottom of it.' It's not easy to stop Silas talking."

"It isn't," the Vicar agreed. "One day I told him he was the biggest windbag in the village, and he answered me at once, 'How about church, maister? I reckon as I've to listen to you a carrying on i' th' pulpit half an hour on eend, an' no one ever a chance o' getting a word in. You can't expect to have it aw yore own road in church and out. Not likely.'"

The Doctor laughed and said, "He had you there, Tim."

"Yes, I suppose he had. I am afraid I am not strict enough with him. I really was angry with him the other day. The church was very cold during the morning service, every one was complaining; but when he showed me the thermometer, it was nearly sixty. I found out afterwards that he puts it in his pocket before he shows it to me if he's late in starting the fire. Still, in spite of all his tricks, I should be sorry to see anyone else in his place."

"So should I, Tim, but not half so sorry as I should be to see anyone else in your place."

After saying that the Doctor put down his clay and took his old briar pipe out of his pocket, filled it, and then resumed. "It's curious how attached one gets to old things. This pipe of mine seems to draw sweeter than any other, though I suppose that is only my fancy. You and I, Tim, have worked together

in Tattlefold for nearly forty years. I should like to work on with you, my old friend, to the end. I don't see why we shouldn't."

After a short pause the Doctor continued, "The Professor was talking to me the other day about the Engineering Works. Jim had been showing him one of their latest machines, a kind of lathe. Jim and the head of the drawing office had worked it out together in consultation with the old foreman of their fitting shop. The Professor had been impressed with the minute accuracy of their drawings, and how everything had been so well thought out and criticised that when the parts were assembled they required little adjustment. Then the Professor said abruptly, 'It did remind me of Father Tim and his young curate. It is one good thing for Tattlefold that the old and the young do work so well together.'"

The Vicar smiled, and remarked, "He said much the same thing to me about you and your young partner, but he had to allow that old machines have to be pulled out to make way for new ones."

The Doctor replied impatiently, "Machines are only machines; they gather no experience."

"True," said the Vicar. "But you can repair them and replace worn parts with new ones. That's more than you can do for your patients, Doctor."

"Hum. I must be going. I advise you to open a bottle of port to-morrow, and I will send the Professor to you as a tonic."

The ambulance class proved a great success, for the young doctor was a favourite with the colliers; they liked his frank manner and his love of a joke; he also lectured well. He took great pains with his class, and even provided a skeleton in order to teach them anatomy. This skeleton proved a bone of contention,

for the Weasel was caretaker of the Old Chapel where they met and his wife objected to the skeleton. She said it was a "nasty dirty thing and it scared the children," so the Weasel schemed how to get rid of it.

A tale went round the village that Silas had dug it up from an old grave and Jimmy Longstern had helped him to get it ready for the young doctor.

As the young doctor shook his head mysteriously when asked where he got the skeleton from, that only confirmed the rumour; but Silas wasn't long in tracing the tale to the Weasel, and as he and Jimmy were both members of the ambulance class they held a council of war and determined to deal faithfully with him.

The ambulance lectures were held once a week, but the members of the class met on other occasions to practise bandaging. One night Silas and Jimmy were unusually clumsy, and when the time for leaving came, Silas said to Jimmy, "Yo mun stay behind a bit an' we'll practise binding each other; I can't get this bandage reet no-how." So they stayed on and began disputing so loudly that the Weasel came in and objected. "It's too bad," he said, "you can be heard right down the road. You must go now, or I shall have to report it."

"Neaw, neaw," said Silas, "yo mun do nowt o' th' kind. We'll be just as quiet as two mousies while I get Jimmy's legs together wi' this 'ere bandage." Silas started fumbling with it and at last Jimmy said, "Dom yore eyes, but yo be clumsy."

"Nay, nay, Jimmy. It be thy legs as is too long for th' bandage, I never seed such spurtles. Neaw, if I wur to try it on Weasel's it ud be long enough; he's as nice a pair of legs as any for a bandage."

"Weel, try it on Weasel, an' let's be goin'."

So they got the Weasel to lie down on the practice table while Silas bound his two legs together. Then, before he realised what they were up to, they seized his arms and pinioned them to his sides threatening they'd gag him if he called out. They fastened him down on the table, placed the skeleton at the end, turned the lights low, went out and waited in the road.

As soon as they left, the Weasel shouted to call his wife's attention. It was some time before she came, but when she did, directly she opened the door she saw the skeleton in the dim light; but she didn't see her husband though she heard him say, "I've been waiting for you long enough." Then she screamed and fled.

She met Silas and Jimmy in the street and told them she had seen her husband's ghost in the old chapel, and it said it was waiting for her, so they must help her to lay it. But they professed great fear, and Silas said, "Yo mun go an' tell Skewgill, 'appen he'll lay him for yo. He be a rare un at dealing wi' devils; they be main feart o' him." Needless to say, Silas made the most of this story.

About this time Mrs. Broadbeam was exercised by a far more serious matter—how to protect her Uncle John from the matrimonial designs of his housekeeper, Ann Sharples. It was not often that Mrs. Broadbeam was at a loss for an expedient, but in this case she had to deal with her Uncle John, who turned down one suggestion after another until she was at her wits' end to know what to do. At last she determined to have it settled one way or another, for the six months was nearly up. She began by talking to him about things in general and gradually led him on to the subject. Then she tackled him boldly.

"Weel, Uncle John. Six months be welly at an end. We mun be doing, or Ann Sharples'll wed yo as certain as yo be sittin' there. She will thot."

"Time enough, Sal."

"Nay, Uncle John, time's welly up. But I can see as yo want to marry Ann; if so be, theer's nowt more to say about it. She'll keep yo out o' th' pub reet enough. Theer'll be nary a one of us as'll grudge yore marrying her, if yo've a mind to. 'Appen it's as weel."

"Now, Sal, what's the use o' talking like thot? What mun we do? In corse I don't want to marry her."

"Weel, Uncle John, I doan see as yo con do better than keep her on as housekeeper, if so be as she'd promise faithful as she'd not marry yo coom what mowt. Now, Silas an' I have figured it out this road. Theer's yore farm an' th' coal business; it ud be easier for yo if yo was to get shut of them. Yo could sell um together as easy as shelling peas."

"Nay, nay, Sal. I've been at th' farm aw my life, an' my family afore me two hundred years or more; yo con't expect me to leave it. I'd be just lost without it."

"Weel, Uncle John, we thowt o' thot, but yo see it's this way. Tattlefowt's not what it used to be. Farm's not what it used to be. Tattle Park, thee knows weel enough, be nigh at far eend wi' th' alkali smoke from Jobling's chimney. It ud be best to sell farm before it geets as bad as th' Park. Coal-dealing pays weel enough, but yo've never had yore heart in it same as in th' farm. Coal carters, thee kneaws, want lookin' arter, what wi' coomin late in th' mornin' an' stopping at pubs on th' road; an' they doan look arter th' horses as weel as they mowt, an' yo're not

so nippy on yore legs as yo used to be, to say nothing of collecting the brass. Yo'd get next to nowt for th' farm, an' yo'd get but little for th' coal business without th' farm to keep th' horses at. Neaw, if yo sold both farm an' aw th' carts an' horses an' th' coal business, yo'd get a tidy lump o' brass for um, an' yo couldn't do better than spend some o' th' brass in buying Silas's house an' th' empty half next to it. Yo could knock a door through from one to t'other as easy as look, then there would be plenty of room for yo both, with Ann Sharples an' 'appen a girl to look arter yo. Thot's how Uncle Silas and I figured it out."

"Weel, Sal, I never 'eard o' such a thing. Ann Sharples an' the two of us! Why, it ud be aw over Tattlefowt as she wur goin' in for bigamy."

"Neaw, neaw, Uncle John. Yo mun be serious."

"Weel, Sal. Theer be summat in what yo've said."

After much discussion Uncle John agreed that Mrs. Broadbeam should see Ann Sharples and offer her certain terms. So Mrs. Broadbeam went to see Ann, and after passing the time of day with her she broached the subject without more ado.

"Weel, Ann, your six months with Uncle John be nigh up, so he's asked me to see you about what's to be done next."

"Isn't he satisfied with the way I've kept house for him, Sarah?"

"He is, Ann, but he's thinking of selling the farm an' th' coal business, an' buying Silas's house an' th' empty part next to, an' driving a door through from one to the other so as they can be comfortable together. An yo mowt go with them, wi' 'appen a lass to 'elp yo to look arter um."

"John's said nothing to me about it."

"No, Ann. I thowt he hadn't. Uncle John's timid, thee kneaws. I believe as he's feart as yo'd marry him."

"How do you know that, Sarah?"

"He ses as yore eye's fixed on him hungry-like, so does Silas."

"That's as may be, Sarah. You're a sensible woman. Put it to yourself. You know as well as I do that it's not John but his money that folks have their eyes set on. I don't suppose your eye's kept off it more than others have."

"Weel, Ann, I won't deny it; aw th' same, brass or no brass, I'd like to see Uncle John reel comfortable, an' Uncle Silas as weel."

"Well, Sarah, you won't get anyone to keep house for him and make him comfortable, same as I have, unless you pay them well."

"Hasn't he paid you well, Ann?"

"No, Sarah, I'll be straight with you; it's little enough, and if he should die I'd be left without a job. I gave up my house expecting something lasting. Now I tell you what I'll do." And Ann laid down her terms, and refused to budge until Mrs. Broadbeam told her what Uncle John proposed to do. Then she said, "I'm glad you've not asked me to put my hand on the book again, Sarah; for I don't mind telling you now, though I didn't think much of it at the time, it rankled afterwards, and I made up my mind I'd pay you out for not trusting me. I'm a respectable woman, and have been all my life, in spite of obstructions after being wedded. My mother brought Jane and me up respectable, and we've both worked hard and kept respectable. I don't go about making work for myself like Jane does, for I see no sense in that, but I've worked hard all the same, and I have always been trusted. You can't wonder at my back being set up

at your not trusting me, and you've no call to blame me for casting my eye over your Uncle John. When a bird's hungry an' sees a big worm right in front of it, you can't expect that bird to keep on the outside of that worm, Sarah."

"No, Ann, not so long as birds is birds and wums is wums, an' I reckon th' Almighty made um so; not as thot's much comfort to the wum when th' bird gets holt on it, but yo never know; Passon ses one thing an' Skewgill says another, an' I reckon it's aw th' same in th' end. Howsomedevour, we doan want yo to swaller Uncle John. Yo understand thot."

"Yes, Sarah, I do. Now you are ready to deal straight with me, I'll act straight with you. I'm not greedy by nature. I mind a verse my mother made us learn when Jane and I were girls:

' Give me enough, Oh, Lord, that I
May never steal a thing;
But not too much, Oh, Lord, lest I
Forget Thy praise to sing.'

Not that I've had much time for singing, but I like a straight deal as well as anyone, and seeing you mean to trust me I'll say quits if you'll agree to split the difference."

"Weel," said Mrs. Broadbeam, "I'm glad yo've spoke out straight. I'll do the best I con, an' I doan doubt as Uncle John'll agree to it. When folks can't agree theer's nowt like being straight without gettin' 'eated up. Things generally straighten out when folks are straight about um, so long as they doan get aireated."

"Thank you, Sarah. I'm glad we didn't beat about the bush, and that you mean to trust me. If it's fixed up I'll make the two old men comfortable. You'll see."

"Weel, Ann, I never doubted you would do thot."

CHAPTER XXIII

THE LAST OF GOLDMARK HALL

MR. JOBLING had given careful directions about the pictures he bought in Florence. They were duly sent to his Art dealer in Wiggleton, with minute instructions as to framing them in bright gold and hanging them in his ballroom before he reached home, if possible.

On his return to Goldmark Hall he was gratified to find that his wishes had been carried out and the pictures were already hung. Mrs. Jobling and Aurora arrived with him one Saturday afternoon, and no sooner had they entered the door than he hurried them off to the ballroom to see his Madonnas all glittering and resplendent. Mr. Jobling's satisfaction can be imagined, but Grandpa refused to look at the pictures, for he had already expressed his opinion of them to Dr. Oldbird, and it was not a favourable one. Besides, there were more important matters that he wished to talk to Mr. Jobling about.

An opportunity for doing so came that evening when they were left alone together at the dinner-table. Mr. Jobling had been irrepressibly complacent. He continued to effervesce after the others left the room until he became conscious that Grandpa was eyeing him curiously. When he subsided Grandpa chuckled and said: "Umph, Jobling, you haven't forgotten how to talk. I've got some news for you."

"Good news, I hope?" Mr. Jobling smiled expansively and added carelessly, "What's it about?"

"Two Companies you talked about when you left for Cannes."

"Which Companies? I'm in so many."

"Umph! If you'd take my advice you wouldn't speculate so much."

"Perhaps not, but you must admit I've done very well out of my speculations. If I hadn't speculated I should never have been able to build Goldmark Hall and do all the other things I have done."

"If I hadn't helped you with the Alkali Works some years ago you'd have gone to smash."

A shade of annoyance crossed Mr. Jobling's face, for he didn't like to be reminded of his failures; but he replied complacently enough, "Yes, that was a narrow squeak. Most people have a spell of bad luck one time or other; it's like measles, it's as well to get it over. You helped me out of a pretty mess that time, but you said you'd never put your hand in your pocket again."

"Umph! I'm glad you remember that."

"Well, what's your news? I haven't heard anything yet from my man, Goldtip, who looked after my business when I was away. He had my power of attorney, so it can't be bad news whatever it is."

"Haven't heard about the United Goldmines of Australia and South Africa? Eh, Jobling?"

"No. What about it?"

"Or about the Consolidated Guano Co.? Eh?"

"They were going strong when I last heard."

"Winding floated both. Eh?"

"Yes, and I believe they are both first-rate concerns. Winding knows what he's about. He was booming

them when I left, but he said the shares would go much higher."

"So they did. You went in heavily? Eh?"

"Yes, I did. They were a first-rate spec. Winding knows what he's about and he advised me to hold on. He'll give me the tip when to sell."

"Umph!" Grandpa said this in such an alarming manner that Mr. Jobling felt a cold wave of apprehension pass down his spine, and he asked with less assurance, "Have you heard anything?"

"Plenty, Jobling. Plenty."

"What have you heard? You are hiding something from me."

"Both Companies bust up."

"Good God!—no—they can't be—I've never heard a thing." Mr. Jobling's agitation was painful to witness. "You must be mistaken," he went on. "I should have heard if anything was wrong."

"No good, Jobling. No good. Both bust up."

Mr. Jobling got up from the table in a state of great excitement and walked up and down the room. Still he hardly believed it, though he was now thoroughly alarmed. Again he said, "It can't be true!"

"I tell you it is. Here! Read this." And Grandpa handed him a cutting from a financial newspaper.

As Mr. Jobling read, the perspiration gathered on his forehead and his eager little eyes seemed to fade. He read on to the end, then said, "I don't know how I missed it. What's Winding doing?"

"Done, you mean."

"Done, then."

"Cut the country."

"What about the liability on the shares?"

"Called up before he went."

"Called up! Why, I'm ruined! Why wasn't I told this in time?"

"Too late. Came like a thunderclap. Besides——"

But Mr. Jobling was too excited to listen any further, and he interrupted his father-in-law by repeating, "Why, I'm ruined!" and then sat down helplessly.

Grandpa looked at him curiously and remarked, "You've plenty of money."

"I had," said Jobling, "but I took up all the shares I could get hold of and committed myself heavily with the bank to do so."

"You're a fool, Jobling. Always were. Always will be."

Jobling hung his head, or rather, he let it sag forward. Grandpa peered at him and then continued, "If you sell Goldmark Hall we can live together in a smaller house. Sophia will be quite happy."

"You don't understand."

"Umph! Don't I?"

"Why, I shall have to give up everything and begin again. What will they say of me?"

"Who?"

"Everybody."

"Does it matter?"

"Of course it does. You don't understand."

"Pull yourself together, Jobling."

"I can't."

"Umph. Jobling can't, so Grandpa must."

Then, drawing a blue envelope out of his pocket, he handed it to Jobling. It contained a report signed by Goldtip. It was marked Private and Confidential. The report showed the daily fluctuations of the market and stated that on a certain day Mr. Haslam (viz., Grandpa) had brought certain news and on the strength of that news Mr. Jobling's shares in both companies

had been sold practically at the top of the market. It took Mr. Jobling some time to read through the report. He began reading it with extreme despondency, but before he had finished the old look of buoyancy returned; and when he put it down he exclaimed: "What luck! Why, you couldn't possibly have sold at a better time. Who gave you that tip?"

"Umph! I'm not such a fool as to tell you."

"Did Colonel Bulger clear out?"

"No. Went bankrupt."

"He's a regular gambler. I met him at Mentone. He came there in order to play at Monte Carlo."

"Next time he meets you he'll cut you."

"He can do what he likes. He went into both companies with his eyes open. It was just a piece of luck your getting that tip. Who gave it you?"

"Umph! Ask Goldtip."

"Did you tell him who you got it from?"

"Ask Goldtip." Grandpa chuckled.

Mr. Jobling quickly recovered his usual self-confidence. Indeed, he rather plumed himself on having displayed the strong nerve of an experienced speculator. In going through the matter with Mr. Goldtip he found that Lord Newpen had been heavily hit and was selling an estate near London. As Mr. Jobling had mentioned these two companies to Lord Newpen he felt that this was an opportunity of showing concern at his misfortune, and at the same time acquiring a fine residence with the prospect of a valuable introduction to society through his lordship.

Mr. Jobling was becoming tired of Goldmark Hall. The country round was getting built on, and the property had become valuable as building land which would be quickly bought by the well-to-do traders of Wiggleton. He set about purchasing the desired

estate from Lord Newpen, and before long was in possession of a beautiful old park with a fine Georgian mansion of red brick to which he determined to add a picture gallery and a tower with a peal of bells.

At first Mrs. Jobling tried to prevent her husband from making these additions to the beautiful old house but, finding he was contemplating even greater changes, she refused to move from Goldmark Hall until the workmen had completed the alterations. Having done this, she effected a compromise by agreeing to move on the understanding that the house itself was to remain unaltered.

Meanwhile, John Skinner and Silas had settled down comfortably together with Ann Sharples to look after them; and, as Mrs. Broadbeam observed, "They mowt a been theer together aw their lives, an' new as Uncle John beant afeard o' being snappit up by any rampageous females he be welly as happy as a king. Silas be well suited too, I reckon."

What the two old men thought of Mr. Jobling's move may be gathered from the following conversation.

"'Ast 'eard, Si, as old Stink o' Brass is selling Goldmark Hall?"

"Aye, John. Th' Irish butler tow'd me thot, an' he said as he'd bought a grand place nigh London Town. He's bought it off Lord Newpen, him as went about talking on educatiun. Butler ses Jobling's taking aw his brass with him, an' he's given a big lump of it to some hospital down theer so as to be made a baronite. Seems as most of th' rubbish from the north 'ere is being teemed over reawnt London Town. I never 'ad no use for owd Stink o' Brass; but his datter be a gradely lass. I doubt she'll not be long in gettin' marrit now as she be goin' to London

'Town. 'Appen she'll tak' a lord on when she's gotten theer."

"Nay, nay, Si; from what butler tow'd yo she's 'ad enough o' lords. I reckon she's kicked traces over neaw, an' hoo'll do as hoo likes. Lasses be as ill to handle as young colts; if yo doan break um in young they geet eawt o' hond. She mowt turn a Woman's Righter neaw like thot theer Prickles. Thot ud stop the lads from running arter 'er, I reckon. It would thot. But I mind as yo tow'd me as butler said she wur carrying on above a bit wi' Master Guy."

"So she wur, John. Aye, an' she mowt a done worse. He wur a deawnreet nice young lad; but yo never kneaw what these picter-makkin' fellers'll do next. Yo doan thot. It aw cooms o' using they watter-colours."

"Nay, nay, Si. It be oil as he wur painting his big picter with."

"Weel, thot may be, but th' oils as they use be little better than watter. Some said as Master Roy's sister be fond o' watter colour, an' she set her cap at 'im but he'd 'ave nowt to do wi' her. Theer wur another tale as Master Guy paid old Stink o' Brass out for sacking him by selling him a dozen Romish picters as he'd got from Italy, an' a funny lot they be by aw accounts—mostly women an' babbys—but you never kneaw. Aw th' same, Master Guy be a gradely painter, he be thot, an' he be a reel nice lad an' aw. I doan doubt as he's best off unmarrit wi' no one to tell him the rights-o'-things. I never had no use for a wife myself. Aw the same, I've missed your Epsie welly as much as yo 'ave yoursel', John."

It was a warm Sunday afternoon towards the end of summer, about a year after John Skinner had settled with Ann Sharples, when this conversation took place.

Silas had given up his post as sexton, and the two old men were both free to spend their time as they liked. They were seated on a bench in front of the house, and as they talked and drowsed the church bells began ringing for the afternoon service. The latch of the door clicked, and Ann Sharples came out of the house dressed in black with her prayer-book in her hand. As she shut the door, she turned to the old couple and said: "I'll be back in time to give you your tea. It's a nice afternoon, so I told Maggie she could go out."

"Aye, aye," Silas replied. "We be reet enough, we shan't get into mischief. Yo can tell us aw abeawt sermon when yo coom back. Mind yo doan stop gossiping too long wi' Jane."

"I never did believe in wasting my time," she retorted; "I leave that to the men."

"When yo're as owd as we be," said Silas, "yo'll tak' it easy same as we do, wi' a short clay in yore mouth, same as th' owd gal at th' corner does."

"I never did have any use for such dirty tricks. The best thing to keep old women out of mischief is to sew or darn so long as they've eyes to see and they can take to knitting after that; but I'd sooner keep going on my legs as long as I can, and I'll last your time, anyhow."

"Yo never know," said Silas. "I've berrit a lot o' young gals in my time. Though I mun allow as yo be pretty tough."

"Well, you won't have a chance of burying me now you've given up being sexton. Time yo did, too, when folks are saying that you dig up the old skeletons and sell them to the doctors."

"Get you gone or you'll be late for church," said John Skinner. "Yo con put summat in th' collecting box for me an' I'll owe it yo."

"I might not get it back if I did." With this parting shot Ann hurried off to church.

Close to where the old men were sitting there was an old beehive, the only one left in the village. John Skinner had always kept bees at the farm and when he left it he brought the hive with him. He felt he couldn't part with his bees; he had always been interested in them. He was looking at the hive now, watching the bees land on the sill and crawl in; as he did so he said to Silas, "First thing as I remember about bees wur seeing them do thot, an' I thowt as they wur cooming whoam tired to sleep. I'd no idee as they wur such busy fowk."

"I reckon thy bees mak' but little honey, John. If I wur yo I'd give up keeping um. It takes yo aw yore time to keep um alive wi' feeding um aw thro winter, an' what little honey yo gets be black an' tastes of alkali, I'm thinking."

"'Appen it does," John agreed. "Aw th' same, I likes to see the bees cooming an' going, it puts me in mind of owd times. I mind when t'other side o' valley theer wur nowt but fields of clover, an' corn, an' taties, an' neeps, an' wurzles an' such like—an' be-ans—aye, an' be-ans. It's a long time since I smelt be-ans aw in flower. Neaw theer be nowt on t'other side but buildings an' chimblys."

"Aye, yo're reet, John; it be a long time sin I smelt be-ans in flower, 'cept when th' Professor took us up into th' country at th' back in his gig. He's one of th' reet sort, not same as owd Stink o' Brass as cares nowt for the likes of us. Talking o' be-ans, I reckon theer's nowt like young be'ans an' bacon, wi' 'appen a glass or two of good ale to wesh um deawn wi'."

"Thot's Bible truth, Si; theer be few as would say no to thot. But arter aw, thot be only for our ballys,

an' I reckon I'd sooner lean over the gate of a field o' be-ans in flower on a fine summer day than mostly owt else. Thee kneaws how sweet th' smell cooms to yo from over um on a warm arternoon. Theer's nowt like it, I'm thinkin'."

"Weel, John, I won't say thee nay. Whether it be for th' stummick or for th' nose, be-ans is hard to beat; aw th' same, I reckon thou art more set on the bumming o' thy bees than owt else."

"Aye, lad. I likes to see um leet on th' sill of the hive theer, kind o' tired-like, ready to crawl in just as we be, lad."

"Neaw, John, doan yo go for to be sentimentious; we ain't at th' far eend yet."

"I never said as we wur, though we be getting on thot road. But hearken, Si—bell's stopped. Ann'll be late, I reckon. That cooms of 'er yaffling wi' thee."

"Not 'er late. She can be nippy on her pins when she likes."

"I doan doubt it, Si. Theer's not much as escapes her."

"Yo did, lad. Ha, ha! Aw th' same, but for Sal I doubt yo wouldn't. She ud a had yo reet enough."

"I'm noan so sure o' thot, Si. Yo see, it wur this road. We didn't trust her as we oughter to ha' done. If we had, it ud ha' been aw reet, I'm thinking; but we didn't; an' Sim went yaffling about Ann's putting her hond on th' eagle i' th' church an' such fool's talk till he got her dander up. It wur a pint o' honour wi' her, yo understand, so she made up her mind to get me tied up wi' her an' take the laugh out of Sim. She mightn't have made such a bad wife neither. Her husband as was never gave her so much as a chance, but she did weel by him aw th' same. Still, I reckon it be best as it is. Yo never kneaws what a woman will do arter she's marrit to yo."

"Weel, John, yo may be reet, for I ain't 'ad no sperience through never being bound i' th' bonds o' 'oly matrimony same as yo. But yo've no cause to complain; Epsie wur a good wife to you, better I doubt than yo desarved."

"'Appen she wur. She wur a reel good wife, but I reckon she wur th' exception as proves th' rule."

"Yore first wurn't so bad, John."

"No. 'Appen not. She mowt a been worse, but she turn't on me at times, thee kneaws."

"Yo may talk as yo like, John, yo've been down-reet lucky; yo've 'ad two an' neither of um bad uns. As I said, yo didn't deserve Epsie. Yo've 'ad an easy time, wi' no childer to worrit yo an' plenty of brass in yore pocket an' aw. I won't say as yo've made a bad husband. Yo're not one of they fellows that go abeawt like wandering 'ens, a laying eggs aw over th' place an' clucking aw th' time as if they'd done summat worth talking about. Yo're not same as owd Stink o' Brass. Th' Irish butler tow'd me that it wur his wife's feyther as made most of his brass for him; an' his wife's no fool neither. Butler said as he'd heard th' owd feyther call Stink o' Brass fool many a time. I reckon it's from t'other side as datter's been bred."

"Weel, Si, I doan doubt what he ses may be true. Aw th' same, we be safe from wives an' from feythers as weel, I reckon; theer be no one to tell us the rights o' things. We be happier now as we be. I wouldn't change places wi' th' Queen."

"I doan doubt it, lad. But si'thee, theer's Sarah. What's oop, Sal? Why beant yo i' th' church?"

"I've been theer this morning, an' thot's more than either of yo have. I promised Susannah as I'd go to chapel this evening."

"Art going to see Skewgill castin' Devils out?"

"Neaw, neaw, Uncle Si. Con't yo forget thot? It wur more than twelve month sin. I reckon yo doan know what it is to see a child of yore own wratched nigh to de-ath, an' yo never able to stir a finger to save it."

"Coom an' sit yo deawn, Sal, an' leave preaching to Skewgill; he con do it better till yo for aw thy prancing on platforms. Yo've no call to tell us the rights o' things. Yo con leave thot to Passon. We beant chapel fowk. Coom an' sit yo deawn atween us—but doan yo go for to bounce! Sit soft, Sal—sit soft, or seat'll break under yo. Yo mun be careful not to let us deawn. John's bones be owd an' they'll snap as soon as not."

"Weel, Uncle Si, I will allow as yo should know more about bones than I do. They have it in the village as yo dug up th' skeleton for the ambulance class, but young Doctor never leet on about it."

"I see yo've been listening to th' Weasel."

"Nay, nay, Uncle Si. It wur aw over th' village, an' the young doctor never denied it."

"Thot's aw talk."

"Weel, 'appen it is. Why, theer's Ann cooming back from church. I mun be goin' or Sam'll have to wait for his tea."

One day, shortly before leaving Goldmark Hall, Aurora went into the library with a newspaper in her hand which she wished to show Grandpa. He was seated at one of the windows looking at a great storm-cloud that was darkening the head of the valley. Secing he was intent on watching it she sat down beside him; and, as she did so, there was a distant muttering of thunder. She looked out on the scene for a minute or two, then she said to him, "Father's sent us a newspaper from London with a passage in it which he has marked with blue pencil. Shall I read it out to you?"

"You can do as you like," he said, and continued to watch the dark storm-cloud in front of which the great Jobling chimney stood out weirdly with its banner of poisonous vapour showing light against the darkness beyond.

The passage which Mr. Jobling had marked with his blue pencil formed part of an account of a new wing which had been added to one of the great London hospitals—

"But no notice of this fine new building would be complete without some allusion to the Merchant Prince, Sir Josiah Jobling, to whose munificence we owe this welcome addition to our great hospital, and on whom her Majesty has thought fit to bestow the title of baronet.

"Born in the year —— and educated at Wiggleton, it was only when he entered the office of Jabez Haslam that he began to display that extraordinary aptitude for business for which he is so justly celebrated. The story of his life is, indeed, a romantic one. Like Dick Whittington, he entered his employer's service when he was a mere youth, and, like Whittington, he rose from rank to rank, and finally married his employer's daughter. He also became Mayor, not of London, it is true—though that may come later—but of one of the great manufacturing centres of the north.

"Sir Josiah has played a leading part in the artistic life of his native borough. He was the first to appreciate the genius of the young painter, Guy Hetheridge, who has since captured the artistic world of London. But for Sir Josiah Jobling, Bart., this young genius might have remained undiscovered. His great picture—'The Chimneys of Tattleton'—has, we understand, been purchased by Sir Josiah in order that he may present it to the Corporation of Wiggleton.

"Ever ready to encourage the arts and endow charitable institutions, such men as Sir Josiah Jobling are not

only the mainstay of England's greatness, but are also the brightest ornaments of our modern civilization.

"As Sir Josiah is still a comparatively young man, we are justified in hoping that the remarkable qualities which have made him one of the leading spirits in the north of England will prove equally valuable in directing the affairs of our great Metropolis."

When Aurora finished reading this effusion, Grandpa said; "Umph! 'Little pigs make the best of bacon.' Big pigs run to lard. I always knew Jobling was a fool. He's a bigger one than I thought."

"Oh, Grandpa!"

"Good thing he didn't fool you into marrying his precious lord. Nearly did! Eh?" Grandpa stopped, but as he got no answer he continued, "Papa's a fool. Sophia knows it and you know it."

Aurora put her hand on his knee, and said, "Grandpa, you are incorrigible!"

"Umph!" he snorted. "Papa will want you to marry an earl now." And, as she made no answer, he said sharply: "Aurora!"

"Yes, Grandpa?"

"Are you going to marry?"

"Perhaps."

Then she smiled, and said, "Guy's coming to-morrow." She continued to smile. It was the smile that used to remind Guy of Monna Lisa.

THE END

GLOSSARY

Abeawt—about

Allus—always

Arst—asked

Aw—all

Arter—after

Baggin-time—meal-time

Bally—belly

Bally-warch—belly-ache

Bant—power, strength

Beawt—without

Blether—talk nonsense

Boggart—ghost

Brast—burst

Care—wander about

Cast—spread

Cont—can't, cannot

Cowd—cold

Crump—crack, blow

Dander—anger

Datallers—day-wage-
men

Deawn—down

Doan—don't

Eawer—our

Eawt—out

Ent—end

Fain—glad

Favver — to be like —
resemble

Feart—feared

Feyther—father

Flunter—level, balance

Flure—floor

Foo—full

Fot—fetch

Fowk—folk

Fowt—fold

Fuddle—get drunk

Fule—fool

Gal—pit pony

Gawmless—witless

Gradely—fine

Heaw—how

Hond—hand

Hoo—she

Howd—hold

Howlet—owl

Jannock—upright, true

Jertin—throwing

Jolterhead—muddle-head

Keer—care

Kench—sprain

Kneaw—know

Lappin—wrapping
Larn—teach, learn
Leet on—tell
Loan—lane
Loan-ent—lane-end

Mazy—dizzy
Moidert—bothered
Mowdiwort—mole
Mun—must

Neaw—now
Neet—night
Nesh—tender, soft
Noan—none, not
Nowt—nothing

Ockard—awkward
Oop—up
Owd—old
Owt—anything

Partly what—almost
Passon—parson
Peart—proud, cocky
Purr—kick

Rattan—rat
Reet—right

Saft—soft
Scrawp—scrape
Shut—rid (*geet shut of*:
 get rid of)
Si'thee—see thee, look
 there

Skeart—frightened
Skrike—cry out
Snicket—hussy
Soop—sup, drink
Sprag—a prop set against
 the coal-face

Theer—there
Thowt—thought
Threeping—gasping
Thrut—thrust
Tiz—rheumatism
Towd—told
Trimmin'—decorating
Twich-clock—cockroach

Um—them

Warch—ache
Wark—work
Warmt—warmed
Wartin—wobbling
Weel—well
Welly—almost
Wesh—wash
Whoam—home
Wick—alive, quick
Wud—would
Wur—was, were
Wurr—worse

Yaffle—chatter
Yarb—herb
Yarbert—Herbert
Yeard—heard
Yed—head



MAP OF TATTLEFOLD,
TATTLETON
& DISTRICT. 19



